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T H E

# POSTHUMOUS WORKS

O F

*JEREMIAH SEED*, M. A.

Late Rector of *Enham* in *Hampshire*.

And Fellow of *Queen's College, Oxford*.

Consisting of

SERMONS, LETTERS, ESSAYS, &c.

Published from the AUTHOR's original Manuscripts.

By *JOSEPH HALL*, M. A.

Fellow of *Queen's College, Oxford*.

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V O L. II.

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M D C C L.



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*And*

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S E R-

# S E R M O N I.

The Duty of Charity stated and enforced.



P R O V. III. 27.

*With-hold not Good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the Power of thine Hands to do it.*

**T**O discourse upon any Duty in Ge-<sup>SERM. I.</sup>  
neral, without applying to Parti-  
culars; is little more than idle  
Declamation and empty Flourish: it is to  
let our Arrows fly at Random, when we  
should direct them to a certain Mark. That  
Charity in general is a Duty, No-body will  
deny: but there are Many, who, on the  
Account of particular Circumstances, think  
themselves entirely discharged from the  
Performance of it: Many, who, though  
they own the Obligation, yet disown it in  
it's due Degrees. Suffer me then to con-  
sider,

VOL. II.

B

I. Who

*Ist*, Who are the Persons obliged to Give to charitable Uses, and in what Proportion.

*IIdly*, Who are the Persons qualified to Receive our Charity.

*IIIdly*, The *Manner* in which we ought to bestow our Charity. And,

*Laſtly*, To lay before you the Motives to this Duty.


Charity, in the most comprehensive Sense of the Word, takes in a large Compass : it extends itself to a hearty Desire and Endeavour to do all possible Good by our Heads as well as our Hands ; by our Words as well as Works : by instructing the Ignorant, advising the Mistaken, reclaiming the Wicked, comforting the Afflicted, encouraging the Virtuous and Worthy, &c. Charity even takes in Piety. For, not to mention that Piety, or a Regard to the Deity, is the Foundation of Charity, or Love to our Fellow-Creatures ; exemplary Piety is one considerable Instance of doing Good : It is *letting our Light shine out before Men*,  
in

in order to promote that Reverence to the Deity which is the Basis of all Virtue. SERM. I.

No Man, of whatever Order or Condition in Life, can think himself unconcerned in the Duty of Charity considered in this View ; and though this be not the principal Point under our present Consideration, yet it may help to direct us in that which is so, and is our first Enquiry ; namely,

*If, Who are the Persons within the Obligations of this Duty, as restrained to the Relief of the Helpless, the Sick and the Needy, &c.*

One would think we should need few Arguments to persuade the Great, the Opu-  
lent, and the Able, to present themselves the foremost in this Rank, and to undertake the principal Share in this Duty. They are Stewards, it is true, and must give an Account : but happy sure is the Steward when his Trust is of such a Nature, that the more freely he dispenses, the more faithful he shall be accounted : When the Merit of his Liberality shall be placed, not to his *Master's*, but to his *own* Account : When the Prayers of the *Poor* shall draw down upon him the Praise and Reward of his *Lord*.


 This too is a Virtue whereof one would hope They would be inclined to shew themselves more eminent Patterns; because as their Station fits them peculiarly for it, so it denies them the Occasions of practising many Virtues of another Sort. They meet with few Affronts, or Injuries, or Oppressions to employ the Virtues of Meekness, Forgiveness and Patience: They experience but little of hard Fortune, less of hard Labour, and nothing at all of the Distresses of Poverty, Hunger, and Cold and Nakedness, to call forth the Virtues of Patience and Resignation and an humble Reliance on Providence.

Now what more proper Method of supplying the *Absence of these Virtues* in themselves than by extending their Charity to those very Persons who do practise them, — by letting *Their* Bounty render the Practice of them somewhat more easy—by allowing themselves to become, in some Measure, the Instruments in God's Hand of rewarding them?

Their Good Deeds then ought to bear Proportion to their Abilities. GOD, who is the Fountain-Head of every good Gift, has made Them the Channels whereby He  
 intends



intends to convey His Blessings to Mankind. Their Charity may begin at Home ; but after the Stream of it has watered their own Garden, they ought not to confine it there ; but let it flow abroad to enrich the neighbouring Soil, and to dispense Plenty and Fruitfulness all around.

This is so agreeable to the common Notions of Mankind, that Every-Body condemns the mean and sordid Spirit of that Wretch ; who, though God has blessed Him with Abundance, and consequently with a Power of blessing others, is yet relentless to the Cries of those who have nothing to plead for them but, what is the most powerful Pleader with every generous Mind, extreme Misery : and have nothing to return but their Prayers ; Prayers, poured forth from the Fulness of a grateful Heart. They look with Abhorrence upon a Man, who is ever amassing Riches without laying any Thing out in Charitable Uses ; as greedy as the Sea, and as barren as the Shore.

Numbers, it is true, think they have done enough in declaiming against the Practice of such Persons : for upon the Great and Opulent they think the whole

SERM. I.

Burden of this Duty ought to rest : but for *Themselves*, they being of somewhat a *lower Class*, they desire to be excused. Their Circumstances, they say, are but just easy ; just sufficient to answer the Demands of their Families, and their own necessary Expences ; and therefore they plead utter Inability, and expect to be totally exempted from the Performance of this Duty. But, before this Excuse will be of any Avail, it behoves them to consider ; whether they do not indulge themselves in Expences unsuitable to their Rank and Condition ; such as Luxury, Gaming, or other prodigal Diversions. If this be the Case, it is no slight Matter to waste that Fortune in Idleness and Riot, which should make them *Feet to the Lamé, and Eyes to the Blind* ; as a *Father to the Orphan*, and as a *Husband to the Widow*. It is no slight Matter to squander away *That* which, if rightly used, would purchase for them the most valuable Treasures ; Treasures in Heaven : but, if abused in unnecessary Expences or sinful Intemperance, lays a Weight upon the Soul, which will make them as dead to all Sentiments of Piety, as they are to those of Charity.

*Compe-*

*Competency* will be a Word of much too large a Signification, if we are to understand by it *Supplies* for costly Eating and Drinking; *Supplies* for high Enjoyment of Life; for Retinue and Equipage. Imaginary Wants are boundless, and Charity must never begin if it is postponed till these have an End.

He, it is true, is *worse than an Infidel*, who does not *provide for his Family*: but it is as true, that our Family ought not to engross all our Substance exclusively of the Poor, who have a Right; even God's Right. For some Part of what we have is *due* to God as an Acknowledgment that we derive from Him the Whole: and God has made the Poor His Substitutes.

I know not whether several of the inferior Sort may not have taken up a Notion, that They have nothing to do in the Works of Charity: a Notion very false, and withal very dangerous. Rich and Poor are equally concerned in the Duty, but in Proportion to their Circumstances. And he that has *Little* is as strictly bound to give something out of that *Little*, as he that has more is obliged to give more. According to that of *Tobit*: *If thou hast Abundance,*

SERM. J.

*give Alms accordingly ; if thou hast but Little, be not afraid to give according to that Little; for thou layest up a good Treasure for thyself against the Day of Necessity.* As the Rich are obliged to relieve the Poor, so even the Poor are also bound, in Proportion to their Circumstances, to help one another. What an Advantage was it to the *poor Widow*, that She, by bringing her *Mite* only into the *Treasury*, could thereby exercise a nobler Charity than the greatest of all there had done ! Have the Poor Little to give ? Charity does not consist in Much or Little, but in doing the best we can, and doing it with a *willing Mind*. The smallest Present imaginable may be the greatest Bounty. And if by the Smallness of it, it prove but of little Benefit to the Receiver, yet it may be of inestimable Use and Benefit to the Giver. And if a Day-Labourer, for Instance, contributes a Day's Work, such a Charity may weigh more, than large Sums from others, and be in the Sight of God of *great Price*. Even the inferior Sort sometimes give into Expences that are not strictly necessary, from which therefore they may and ought to retrench somewhat

what to bestow on those who want even SERM. I.  
Necessaries.

The only Persons then that seem to have a fair Right of pleading an entire Exemption from this Duty are Those whose Circumstances are deeply involved : for till we can satisfy our Creditors we ought not to relieve the Poor. We must be *just* before we can be *charitable*. It would be unjust to give away what is not our own ; and nothing is properly our own but what remains after our just Debts are cancelled. *Owe no Man any Thing*, says St. Paul, *but to love one another* ; when we owe no Man any Thing in the *legal Sense* but what we can pay, then we must answer the other great Debt, as much a Debt in the Eye of Reason — the *Loving one another*, expressed in proper Instances of Kindness and Benevolence.

What has been the greatest Bar to the Exercise of this Virtue is, the Difficulty of pitching upon any fixed and stated Proportion, short of which our Charity ought not to fall : and where the determinate Measure of Duty is not or cannot be assigned, there Men's Interest or Covetousness will be ever suggesting Excuses for the Non-Performance  
of

SERM. I. of it. We ought to adjust our Bounty to our Abilities; but, as there is no fixed Standard, we seem willing to take Advantage of that Circumstance, and to measure our Abilities by our Inclination.

In Order to remove this Impediment, if we are not more disposed to deceive than to direct our Consciences, we ought to follow the Rule laid down in all doubtful Cases, *i. e.* to chuse the Part which is least dangerous. As in the Gratifications then of Eating and Drinking, we should rather take too little than too much of our Liberty, for Fear of being betrayed into Intemperance; so in the Exercise of Charity, we should rather exceed than fall short, for Fear of incurring the Guilt of Uncharitableness.

Again, the Apostle, giving the *Corinthians* Directions, orders; *That every Man should lay by in Store as God had prospered him*: that is, according to his Income, Increase or Revenue. Here then it may be of Use to shew, that the *Jews* were, by the express Command of God, obliged to appropriate the tenth Part of their Revenue every three Years to Charitable Uses. Thus we read in  
*Deuter-*

*Deuteronomy xiv. 28. At the End of three* <sup>SE R M.</sup>  
*Years thou shalt bring forth all the Tithe*  
*(or Tenth) of thine Increase that same Year,*  
*and shalt lay it up within thy Gates : And*  
*the Stranger, the Fatherless and the Widow*  
*which are within thy Gates, shall come and*  
*eat, and be satisfied ; that the Lord thy God*  
*may bless Thee in all the Work of thine*  
*Hand which thou doest.*

Now the tenth Part of their Income every three Years is the thirtieth Part of their Yearly Revenue : If then the *Jews*, under a Dispensation which laid less Stress upon Charity, were bound, besides their ordinary and occasional Charities, to set aside the thirtieth Part of their Increase for the Poor : certainly we, who are blessed with a Religion where Charity shines with the most distinguished Lustre ; we, whose *Righteousness* ought to *exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, should not at any Time fall short of this Measure, how much soever our Generosity may prompt us sometimes to go beyond it.

But farther, it ought to be remembered that one or two occasional Acts of Charity are not sufficient to denominate a Man *Charitable*. He alone is a Charitable Man

SERM. I.

whose Disposition is always inclined to Charity: who is at all Times glad to relieve Distress when he can, and sorry when he cannot: whose Bounty reaches as far as his Power extends, whose Benevolence takes in *all* the Objects of Charity, and whose Discretion singles out the *most proper*: which brings me,

II. In the Second Place, to consider Who are the Persons qualified to *Receive* our Charity. And,

1<sup>st</sup>, We ought rather to succour the *Distressed*, than increase the Happiness of the *Easy*: because we are to do the most Good that we can. In the latter Case, it is like giving Wine to a Man that hath already quenched his Thirst; in the former, it is like giving a Cordial to a Person fainting. According to that of *Ecclesiasticus*; *Mercy is seasonable in Time of Affliction, like Clouds of Rain in Time of Drought*. It is sending a gracious Rain, and refreshing what is weary and parched up. Even the *Bad*, much more the *Good*, are to be relieved in Cases of extreme Necessity. It is a Mistake to imagine that Hatred to Sin should make us uncompassionate to Sinners in



in Extremity. To convince us of this we need only reflect, that if the Son of God had regarded Sinners with the same un pitying Eye, Mankind had never been redeemed. Had God hated Sinners after this Manner the World itself had long ago been annihilated. No: if suffering *Innocence* only gave a Title to Compassion, the Sun had never rose on the Unjust; no, never perhaps on Thee, who deniest that Mercy to suffering Vice, which Thou dost expect from God. Our Pity, the universal Language of Nature, calls loudly upon us to relieve both the Good and the Bad, who are just ready to perish. Those then are the most proper Objects of Relief, who are incapable of relieving themselves. But,

2<sup>dly</sup>, The best Charity we can give to the *Poor* that have Ability and Strength, is to employ them in *Work* that They may not contract an Habit of Idleness; and so the Public not only lose the Advantage of their Service, but likewise become chargeable with an useless Incumbrance.

But yet, if *such* be not able to earn a competent Livelihood; if the Produce of their Labour be not proportionable to the Demands of a numerous Family; then still  
2 they

SERM. I.

they are proper Objects of our Charity. Nor can there well be a more pitiable Case than that of those whose daily Drudgery, after the utmost they can do, will not procure daily Bread for themselves and their Household. To consider a Parent, who has toiled out the live-long Day in Hardship, who yet at Night, instead of finding Rest, shall find a Pain more insupportable than all his Fatigues abroad — the Cravings of a small helpless Family which He cannot satisfy; this is enough to give the most lively Touches of Compassion to every Heart that is not past Feeling. Certainly when the Poor have done all they *can* for a Supply of their Necessities; the Rich do not do all they *ought*, if they do not make up, what is wanting, out of Their Abundance. If there be any Case more deplorable it is,

3dly, That of *Theirs*, who, after having been accustomed to Ease and Plenty, are, by some unavoidable Reverse of Fortune, by no Folly or Fault of their own, condemned to bear, what they are the least able to bear, the galling Load of Poverty: who, after having been perhaps *Fathers to the Fatherless* in the Day of their Prosperity, are now become the *Objects* of that  
Charity

Charity they were wont so liberally to dispense. These Objects plead the more strongly for our Relief, because they are the least able to reveal their Misery, and make their Wants known. But,

4<sup>thly</sup>, *Fatherless Children* particularly demand our Care, to fence their tender Bloom of Years against the early Blasts of Vice; to conduct them with a safe but gentle Hand through the dangerous Stages of Infancy, Childhood, and Youth. To give them at an Age, when their Minds are most susceptible of *good* Impressions, and their Memories the most tenacious of *any* Impressions; to give them early Notices of Piety, to enable them to become useful Members of Society; who if turned a-drift and left defenceless would, without the extraordinary Grace of God, become so many Pests and Nuisances to it.

And is it not much more discreet and rational to apply our Charity to *such* Objects, where there can be no Danger of Misapplication, than to run the Risque of misplacing it upon *Vagrants* and *common Beggars*? who, for ought we know, may be Counterfeits; whose greatest *Want* may be that of Virtue.

SERM. I.

I would not however be misunderstood: When there are strong Appearances and Symptoms, that *these last* are in extreme Necessity, the good-natured and charitable Part is to be preferred. If it happen to be an Error, it is at the worst an Error on the right Side.

5<sup>thly</sup>, Another Sort of Persons that have a Right to our Charity are the *Sick*: Solomon hath observed long ago, that when *Heaviness in the Heart of a Man maketh it stoop*, then *a good Word maketh it peculiarly glad*. Reflect therefore seriously and tenderly on the Condition of such Persons; for they sometimes suffer a good deal from the mere *Inattention* of those about them, who yet could not be brought on any Terms to do *deliberately*, what they apprehended to be cruel or unkind. Let us, in the Language of afflicted *Job*, (for afflicted Persons know best how to speak of Affliction) let us *put our Soul into their Soul's Stead*: let us patiently bear those Instances of Peevishness and Fretfulness into which, under such a Pressure, they may be apt to fall; imputing them to their Distemper, and not to themselves. In a Word, let us endeavour to ease their Sufferings as heartily

heartily as if they were our own; and to bear our own as patiently and resignedly as we generally do those of others. SERM. I.

Some indeed of the tender and compassionate Make seem to feel so much for and with others, that one cannot help wishing they might feel as little as possible for themselves. They are sure at least of suffering nothing *alone*. Every one that hath the least Tincture of Humanity must suffer with them in Distress; *with* them, *from* whom they are sure to suffer nothing; nothing by an unkind Word or Deed.

This Point, though well deserving our Attention, is but seldom touched upon; for which Reason I have dwelt the longer upon it.

III. I now proceed to my third general Head, which was to consider the *Manner* in which we are to dispense our Charity.

Acts of Mercy, public and private, have both their peculiar and distinguishing Excellencies: neither are to be omitted. To say that because our Saviour has commanded us to give our Alms *privately*, therefore

we are not to exercise any Acts of *public* Charity ; would be as ridiculous as to argue, that because private Prayer is commanded, public Worship is forbidden. To put our Virtue to the Test ; to try whether it be genuine (as founded upon a pure unmixed Principle of pleasing God without any sinister Views of worldly Applause) our Saviour has ordered us to give Alms secretly ; and our *Father which seeth in Heaven will reward us openly*. That Virtue, on the other Hand, might not lose the Benefit of public Example, He has commanded that, at other Times, we *let our Light so shine before Men, that they may see our good Works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven*. If all our Charity was to be intirely secret, removed from the Eye of the World ; it would decay and dwindle into nothing. Just as Religion itself would, for Want of a conspicuous, exemplary, avowed Piety : Both the one and the other then stand in great Need of a public Countenance and Encouragement, which stamp a Credit upon them in the midst of a crooked and degenerate Age. If Charity, on the other Hand, was to be done always publicly and openly : with Religion again it would de-  
generate

generate into mere Hypocrisy, Formality, and outside Shew. Wisely therefore, very wisely, has our Saviour (who has given us the most perfect Model of Religion) enjoined both the public and the private Practice of this one great and essential Duty of it.

In the Exercise of public Charity great Care is indeed to be taken that we suffer not ourselves to be influenced by Ostentation, or any sinister Motive. Even the Sense of shewing a good Example, and the inward Risings of Pity, ought to be backed, if they be not introduced, by the most noble and generous Motive of all, the discharging our Duty to God.

By the Way; what an exalted Turn of Mind must He have, who can be content to suspend all Thoughts of Praise, till he receives it in that Place where his Actions cannot be misinterpreted; who can put off the Desire of Applause till he receives *that* Applause of infinitely more Value, than the united Commendation of all Beings in the whole World besides, that most invaluable Applause of his Creator——*Well done thou good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord?*

But besides the Circumstance of *Place*, there is the *Manner* in the *Person* to be observed, which is sometimes as engaging as the Bounty he bestows. It is the least Glory in a Person of Worth to be superior to others in Point of Station and Fortune: his greatest Honour is to make that Superiority sit gracefully upon him, without any forbidding Appearances; and to make his Inferior as little sensible of it as possible by an easy Dignity, and by an affable Complacency of Behaviour. An Action good in itself is greatly recommended by an agreeable Manner of doing it: an agreeable Manner being to Actions, what a lively Manner of Expression is to our Sense; it beautifies and adorns it, and gives it all the Advantage whereof it is capable. There is the same Difference between a beneficial Deed, when endeared by an easy, affable Deportment, and when destitute of that Circumstance, as between a beautiful Object when enlivened by the chearful Light of the Sun, and when exhibited in a dim, sickly Light. In a Word, it is our Duty in general not only to have Virtue, but to make our Virtue truly amiable. A Gift may be great in itself, but if it is dispen-



fed with several ungracious Circumstances, SERM. I.  
in an over-bearing Way, or without the  
Appearance of a willing Mind, it is like an  
ungainly Building, admirable only for it's  
Magnitude; which does not affect or strike  
us half so much as one of smaller Dimen-  
sions adjusted with Symmetry and Harmo-  
ny of Parts, and set off with the additional  
Beauty of decent Ornaments.

A Delicacy of this Kind is most chiefly  
to be observed with those who have *not*  
*been used* to receive Charity: where *we*  
should endeavour as much to conceal our  
Benevolence, as *they* do to hide their Mi-  
sery: imitating herein the Behaviour of an  
Heathen Philosopher, who contrived his  
Bounty to be conveyed in so indirect a Man-  
ner; that Chance rather than Design seemed  
to have had the Disposal of it. But this  
leads me,


IV<sup>thly</sup>, and *Lastly*, To lay before you  
the *Motives* to Charity; and,

1. The first may be drawn from *Com-  
passion*.

*Compassion* is the Call of our *Father*  
*which is in Heaven*, to us His Children who  
are in Prosperity, to put us upon Relieving

our Brethren who are in Distress. This is an Affection wisely interwoven in our Frame and Nature by the Author of all Nature: that whereas dry and abstracted Reason is too sedentary and remiss a Counsellor, we might have a more instant and vigorous Pleader in our Breasts to excite us to acts of Charity. As far indeed as it is ingrafted in us, it is mere *Instinct*; but when we cultivate and cherish it till we *love Mercy*; when we dwell upon each tender Sentiment that opens our Mind, and enlarges our Heart; then it becomes a *Virtue*. Every one, who has not erased all Sentiments of Humanity, must be intimately conscious (the very highest Degree of Certainty) that he has *such* a Principle: And it is a material Observation, which may still give us a deeper Sense of the Goodness and Wisdom of God in framing our Nature, that we are more passionately and feelingly affected to behold the extreme *Anguish* of a Person that is even a Stranger to us, than we are to see the *Happiness* of one that is indifferent to us. We are more apt in *this Case to weep with them that weep*, than we are in the other *to rejoice with them that do rejoice*. Now the Reason, why

why God has given us more quick and vigorous Touches of Compassion in the one Case, than of Joy in the other, is plainly this; it is more in our Power to relieve Distress, than it is to promote Happiness. When a Person has had some considerable Success, our hearty Congratulation is in a great measure, if not altogether, useless and unavailing; he has already gained his Point, and *our* Joy will add little or nothing to *his*. But when we see a Person in Distress, a quick and pungent Sense of his Pains is of great Use to him: it prompts us immediately to relieve him, or to solicit his Relief; and, in relieving him, we in some Sense relieve ourselves. Reason, however noble a Principle, is like Old-Age; too slow, languid and unresolving: But the Passions, like Youth, when they are heartily interested, set every Engine at Work; and leave nothing unattempted to compass their End. Whoever then thou art, whose Heart is hardened and waxed gross, put thyself in the Room of some poor unfriended Wretch, beset perhaps with a large Family; broken with Miseries, and pining with Poverty; his Mind as it were bleeding inwards, while silent Grief, like a Worm

SERM. I.  at the Core, preys upon his Vitals: in such a Case what wouldest Thou think it reasonable thy rich Neighbours should do? —that they, like the *Priest* and *Levite* in the Gospel, should look on Thee with an Eye of Indifference, and then *pass by on the other Side* regardless? — or that, like the good *Samaritan*, they should *pour* Balm into thy wounded Spirit? — Be thyself the Judge, and whatever thou shalt think reasonable thy Neighbours should *do* unto Thee, in such a Situation; go now, and *do likewise* unto them. Make the Case of the Poor your own, and then consider how much you would, or might with Reason, *expect* from the Rich and Easy, and then *give* accordingly.

2. The second *Motive* is the Pleasure of *Benevolence*.

The Reason and Foundation of Charity, the principal End and Design of Alms-giving, looks not more at the Relief of the Indigent, than at the training Men up to mutual Love and Good-will, in order to qualify them for Heaven. Mean and illiberal is the Man, whose Soul the Good of himself can intirely fill and ingross. True Benevolence, extensive as the Light of the Sun,

Sun, takes in all Mankind. It is not indeed in your Power to support all the Incurable and Aged ; it is not in your Power to train up in the Paths of Virtue several helpless, friendless, fatherless Children. But if, as far as the Compass of your Power reaches, nothing is hid from the Heat of your Bounty, and, where your Power falls short, you are cordially affected to see the Work done by others, or heartily sorry to see it is not done : those Charities which you could not do, nay which were never done, will be placed to your Account. To grasp thus the whole System of Reasonable Beings with an overflowing Love is to be—what shall I call it? —it is to be almost infinitely good—it is at least to make as near Approaches as possible to infinite Goodness. And can there be any Thing more transporting than to possess this humane, this God-like Quality? Yes, the Pleasure rises higher, if our Abilities be great, as well as our Inclination. What can affect a generous Soul more, than to make Misery and Woe vanish before him, like Darkness before the Light ; to raise a Heart that was sinking beneath the Weight of Grief? To brighten up that Countenance, which was  
over-

SERM. I.

overcast with Sorrow, into Joy and Gladness? To revive with refreshing Showers of Love and Kindness that *barren and dry Land where no Water was?* How must his Heart *burn within him* while his Hands are thus stretched out! Believe me, it is but a well-judged, more refined, and better Taste for Pleasure, to lay out, in *undoing the heavy Burden* of our Fellow-Creatures, *that* Money which all of us, more or less, expend in innocent but useless Gratifications; and too many of us, it may be, in criminal Pleasures. And who would not deny himself the short-lived Indulgence of some Appetite, some trifling and gay Diversion, rather than see his Brother pinched with Necessity, and starving with Want? Deny himself, did I say? No; *He* denies himself the most, who refuses to purchase so many lasting and unallayed Pleasures at so easy a Rate.

We are affected with delightful Sensations when we see even the *inanimate* Parts of the Creation, those Meadows, those Trees and those Flowers in a flourishing State. There must be some deep and rooted Melancholy at the Heart, when all Nature appears smiling and cheerful about

us in its most advantageous Dress, if we are not inclined to correspond with the Rest of the Creation, and join in the universal Chorus of Joy. But if Meadows and Trees in their Verdure, if Flowers in their Bloom, and all the *vegetable* Parts of Nature in Chearfulness *at this Season*, can inspire Gladness into the Heart, and drive away all Sadness and Despair; to see the *rational* Parts of the Creation flourishing, ought to give us a Pleasure as much superior, as the latter are above the former in the Scale of Beings. But still the Pleasure is greater, if we have been instrumental in contributing to their Happiness; if we have watered these Plants with our Bounty, and fenced them from the Inclemencies of the Seasons.

He that centers all his Regard upon himself, exclusively of others, has placed his Affections very oddly; he has placed them on the most worthless Object in the World — himself. He that has shut his Hands, and steeled his Heart, against all Impressions of Compassion, is a most insignificant Blank in the Creation. He may have Sense enough to *get* and *keep* his Fortune;

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tune ; but he has too little Spirit truly to *relish* and *enjoy* it, by communicating it to others. For Joy like Light grows greater by being communicated : and that Happiness, which is solitary, is but Happiness by Halves. And if, as our Saviour says, *it is more blessed to give than to receive*, then you are to look upon *him* who asks, and deserves your Charity, as your greatest Benefactor. He that brings you an Opportunity of doing Good, substantial Good, in Effect *obliges* you ; he brings you what is far more valuable, and more valued by every good Man, than the Gold and Silver which you part with to him. To be *rich in good Works* is the most lasting Riches.

But this brings me to the last *Motive* which at present I shall suggest for our Charity, which is,

3. Thirdly, The Recompence of the *Reward*.

We are all, Rich and Poor, travelling to one Country ; and we should not scruple to accommodate our indigent Fellow-Travelers with Necessaries on the Road, when we are sure of being repaid at our Journey's End with an immense Reward. And remember that at the last Day, the great  
Question



Question will not be, whether you have SERM. I. been *negatively* good, whether you have done no Harm? but, what Good you have done? What *Hungry ye have fed? What Sick ye have visited? The Rich-Man* in the Gospel is not charged with injuring any Person, or defrauding his Neighbour. The only Fault recorded is, that he *fared sumptuously every Day*, while *Lazarus lay at his Gate* perishing for Want of common Necessaries. He was One of that Set of Men, a numerous Set, who are very hospitable to those that do not want, and very unfriendly to those that do.

This then was his Crime; and yet the next Report that we have of him is; that *in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torments*. A melancholy and shocking Consideration to those *who have this World's Goods, and yet shut up their Bowels of Compassion* against their Brethren in Distress.

Our Saviour has made the Poor his Representatives: — *Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.* And Solomon says, *He that giveth unto the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord.* Charity is then a Treasure transferred to Heaven. It bestows on the Receiver the  
 Comforts

SERM. I. Comforts of this Life ; and on the Giver  
 the Glories of another.

It is the last Thing I should believe, that the Man who acted by a Principle of Obedience to his Maker, has cherished each generous and liberal Movement of the Soul, with a Head ever-studious to contrive, a Heart ever-willing to promote, and Hands ever-active to distribute to, the Good of his Fellow-Creatures, should notwithstanding be doomed to be an Associate for ever of those accursed Spirits, in a Place where Benevolence never sheds it's kindly Beams : But Malice and Anguish, and Blackness of Darkness reign for evermore.

No : the Riches that we have given away will remain with us for ever. *Charity never faileth*——the same Habit of Love which we have begot and confirmed by many repeated Acts of Kindness will accompany us into another World. When we have *shewn Mercy* to our Fellow-Creatures we may safely expect *it* from our Creator.

*To whom, &c.*

SERMON

# SERMON II.

The Christian Life a progressive State.



PROV. IV. 18.

*The Path of the Just is as the shining Light; shining more and more unto the perfect Day.*

**A** Great many, and some too who call SERM. II.  
 themselves Philosophers (who, by  
 the Way, never understood the  
 true End of Living) have represented hu-  
 man Life, as a dull Business not worth a  
 Man's Care; where the same Things come  
 over and over again, *like a Tale that is*  
*told*: Which, however entertaining it  
 may appear while it is new; yet, by  
 frequent Repetitions, at last becomes per-  
 fectly tedious and insipid. The Conse-  
 quence of which has been, that many,  
 viewing the Picture in this disagreeable  
 D 2 Light,

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Light, have been inclined to throw off all Concern about it ; any farther than to arrive at a secure Indolence of Body, and a peaceful Tranquillity, or rather Insensibility of Mind ; to shut out all Reflexion any farther than just to remedy or remove such Inconveniences, as the common Accidents of Life may occasionally produce : And others, loathing the same Viands so often served up, or fretted and soured by the many Crosses and Calamities intailed upon this imperfect State, have, as ridiculouſly as rashly, put an End to their Being.

And true it is, that the Lives of too many have been but one barren Circle, to which they have been as it were enchanted, going round and round continually ; ever in Motion, but never ridding any Ground. But though many may have *made* Life a dull Round of insignificant Actions, yet no Man had ever *Occasion* to make it so. It is so indeed to Brutes, which soon arrive at that Pitch of Perfection which is allotted to their Nature : where they must stop short, without a Possibility of going any farther. *Sense*, which is the highest natural Power they have, moves in a narrow Sphere ; it's Objects in Comparison

few;

few; and moreover dull and gross: And therefore not only come more quickly round, but become more languid and dull in every Revolution. But Man is endued with nobler Faculties, and presented with nobler Objects whereon to exercise and employ them. The Contemplation of all moral and divine Truths to engage his Understanding: The Love of the Creator, and all the Beauties of the natural and moral World to attract and captivate his Affections: The Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God manifest in the whole Extent of the Creation, to exalt his Admiration, and call forth all his Praise. The Opportunities of all good Actions to produce the Pleasures of Virtue and a good Conscience. Nothing can bound the noble Range of Reason, ever improving, and ever improvable; nothing can abate the Ardor of the Affections, which are placed upon the Fountain and Foundation of all Love, of all Beauty and Harmony: Nothing can diminish the Admiration of a Universe, where the very minutest Parts are above the highest human Comprehension: Nothing can deaden the Pleasures of Virtue

SER. II. and a good Conscience, which, the more they are tasted, the more they are desirable. Here is a noble Path for a rational Creature to travel in: His continued Advancement in it, his daily Improvement in Knowledge, Virtue and Goodness will constitute his highest Perfection here, and terminate in a perfect Consummation of endless Bliss and Glory: *The Path of the Just is as the shining Light; shining more and more unto the perfect Day.* From which Words I shall take Occasion to shew,

*1<sup>st</sup>*, That it is in every Man's Power to make his Life a progressive State.

*2<sup>dly</sup>*, Offer some Reasons and Considerations to engage us in such a Practice; and,

*Lastly*, Conclude with some Reflexions relative to the Subject.

And, *First*, it is in every Man's Power to make his Life a progressive State. If we trace the Progress of the human Mind from the first Dawnings of Sense and Reason, we may see from what small Begin-

nings it acquires a prodigious Store of intellectual Knowledge. The View fills us with Admiration, and we are naturally led to wish, nay, to make it the Sum of our Wishes, that we could be able to traverse those Regions of Science, whereof some noble Genius's have made themselves Masters: But though we admire, we need not complain. It has indeed pleased the All-wise Governor of the World to make a great Distinction in the original Frame of human Souls, with Respect to the *intellectual* Powers: A Provision absolutely necessary for answering the Purposes of civil Government, where a Subordination is necessarily implied; for so much Wisdom will always produce so much Power. But whether we may always observe it or no, our Saviour's Command to his Disciples is virtually fulfilled in every Community: *He that is the greatest among you, let him be your Servant.* If the Men who are blessed with distinguished Abilities, make a proper Use of them (and otherwise they need not be envied) they are really increasing the Measure of the publick Good; and, in that, doing Service to the meanest Individual:

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dual : And therefore Reputation and Esteem are but a due Acknowledgment for their good Offices. But to expect or desire Honour from *Men* is but a low Ambition. Let us try to recommend ourselves to the Approbation of him, whose *Judgment is not as Man's Judgment*. The very best Part of Knowledge is knowing how to discharge rightly our Duty to God ; and therefore the Performance of that Duty must still be of higher Estimation. And in this Mankind are more upon an equal footing. The moral Powers, like the natural Perfections of the Body, are more equally distributed ; and in them there is as large a Field laid open for our Advancement towards Perfection, as there is in the Intellectual.

It is true, we may have unhappily struck into a wrong Path, and be wandering in the Ways of Wickedness : But, by a serious Recollection, and Application to Divine Mercy, we may yet find a *Lantern to our Feet, and a Light unto our Paths*. Our evil Habits, those Cords that hold us in Captivity to Sin, though we may not be able at once to cast them away from us, yet  
we



we may insensibly weaken, and at last break afunder, by gradually unravelling the smaller Lines of their Contexture. Our Inclinations, that may have taken a wrong Bent, we may counteract, and by Degrees recover to their original Rectitude. Where our Nature favours a particular Virtue, there we may second it, and graft upon it; under the Branches whereof other hopeful Seeds may take Root, spring up, and prosper. After this we may still be looking into the Culture of the Soul, and studying daily Improvements, by calling forth Virtues, or several Degrees of Virtue, that have not yet made their Appearance, by cherishing and bringing to Perfection those that have. Thus will our Minds resemble those Fruit-Trees, in which, while several of the Productions are come to Maturity, others are blossoming, and giving Promises of reaching the same Degrees of Excellence.

No Man knows what he can do, till he is firmly resolved to do whatever he can. When Men have thought themselves obliged to set about any Business in good Earnest, they have done that which their Indolence

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dolence made them suppose impossible. There are several Abilities unknown to the Possessors, which lie hid in the Mind for Want of an Occasion to call them forth.

Instead of arming themselves with holy Resolutions, instead of summoning all the Courage that ought to inspire every faithful Soldier of Christ; how apt are Men to frighten and intimidate themselves by imaginary Difficulties and Dangers? In their View of the heavenly *Canaan* they act as those who went to spy out the earthly: They look upon themselves to be no more than Grasshoppers, in Comparison of the Enemies they are to encounter; and thereby check and controul that honest Ambition, which it is their special Interest to cherish, to animate and incite: The Ambition of standing foremost in the Rank of good Men.

One can scarce have too high an Opinion of the Powers of the human Soul, especially in the Affair of our Salvation; and scarce too low an Opinion of Men's Inclinations to exert those Powers in that most important Case.

But

But farther, though God does not dispense a Measure of Grace equal in itself to every Individual, because some Men may have greater Difficulties from the Force of Constitution to struggle with than others, or for other Reasons unknown to us; yet he has dispensed to every one a Measure of Grace equal to the Duty he demands from him, equal to the Reward he intends for him. God hath given to no Man *irresistible Grace*; for when he *had done all that could be done to his Vineyard, yet it brought forth wild Grapes*: But he has given to every Man *effectual Grace*; such Grace, I mean, as in Reason may, and in Fact will, produce the intended Effect, if the Receiver uses his utmost Endeavours; that is, if he takes all the Care that Men customarily and ordinarily do in all other Points, though of less Concern, when they set their Hearts upon them. For God hath promised in Scripture, that he will deal with us in bestowing Grace as an affectionate Parent does in giving his Child a Sustenance. He will not give him so sparing a Provision as may barely keep him alive; but such a Sufficiency as may make Life easy and comfortable

able to him : Even so will our heavenly Father bestow the Riches of his Grace to facilitate the Election of those, whose Hearts are set upon their eternal Interest, with as much Earnestness as they sometimes are upon their temporal ; and who use the same Industry and Application in the Attainment of the former, as they do in the latter.

To this let it be added, that although in other Cases the Will and the Power are very distinct Things, yet here they are in many Instances the same, and perfectly coincide ; for, as all Virtue is seated in the Will, the very fixed and determined Will to be virtuous, is Virtue itself. He who is resolved, with the whole Energy of his Mind, to be a better Man, is, in Fact, the better for being so resolved ; as, on the other side, he that is resolved to be wicked, is really so, though he may not have an Opportunity of perpetrating the outward Act.

We see then, that we have the same natural Power, the same gracious Aid and Assistance, for persevering and improving in every Virtue and Grace, as we had originally

ginally for attaining them. What then should restrain or hinder our continual Progress? Does the Difficulty lie in the Thing itself? Is it a harder Task to continue and grow more perfect in a Habit of Virtue, than it is at first to acquire such Habit? On the contrary, it has always been presumed, and always allowed, that whatever Difficulties and Discouragements may attend our first Entrance on the Paths of Virtue, yet on pursuing our Journey we find the Prospect more chearful and inviting every Step we take: Whatever Mixtures of Vice may debase the first Compositions of Virtue, yet each Repetition of good Actions, like the repeated Effays of the Refiner, separates the Dross, and leaves the Substance more pure. However the Soul, at it's first Rising from the Ground, may flutter and mount heavily; yet, when once it is thoroughly upon the Wing, it flies along with an easy, vigorous, and continued Motion; and, in Allusion to the Words of the Text, though the first Dawn of Religion upon the Souls of Men may be but as the Wings of the Morning, spreading themselves upon the Mountains, yet it gradually attains to a meridian Altitude. La-

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Labour and Exercise may be prosecuted to such Degrees of Excess as to render the Body weary, weak, and languid; the Pursuits of Knowledge may be carried so far as to impair the intellectual Powers; so that an immoderate Application to Study may not only create a *Weariness in the Flesh*, but may endanger the whole Constitution of the Mind: and in endeavouring to make ourselves *wise*, by sitting into subtle Speculations, we may, literally speaking, become *Fools*: Nay, our very Will, when oppressed and overborn by irregular and tumultuous Passions, is forced frequently to yield and give Way; whereby we are delivered over to the Extremes either of Rage or Melancholy. But none of the Faculties of our Minds, or Organs of our Bodies, are the least endangered by the Meditations on, and the Practices of Virtue and Religion. On the contrary, Virtue has the same Effect on the Eye of the Understanding, as Light has on the corporeal Eye, it refreshes and enlivens our Spirits, and spreads a Chearfulness over every Thing around us.

The

The Finger of the Almighty seems visible in this, pointing out unto us the Employment whereunto we ought principally to devote ourselves: Inasmuch as he who hath created all Things with such a Disposition and Fitness to certain Uses and Ends, that, in following this natural Bent, they arrive at the greatest Perfection in themselves, and at the same Time are productive of the greatest Good to the Universe; but by any other Appropriation, become either useless, as incompetent to attain the ill-designed Effect, or produce something monstrous and injurious: He, I say, hath ordained *our* Frame with such an Aptitude to moral and religious Exercises, that whereas every other continued Application is attended always with something that is irksome and distasteful, often with something that is pernicious and destructive; yet so far are we from feeling any Weariness in well-doing, that moral and religious Meditations are the very Food of the Soul. Adding Virtue to Virtue is adding Strength to Strength; the greater Acquisitions we make of this Sort, as in the Case of worldly Riches, we are enabled thereby to make still the greater.

One

One great Reason why Men do not quicken their Pace more in the Ways of Goodness, is owing to a very great Mistake in the Judgments they are apt to form of themselves by using a deceitful Standard. They are not at any Trouble to get exact Notices of Perfection and Goodness, and to examine their Lives by such truly imitable Patterns : They never consider Virtue in her native and divine Image, they only consider it as brought down to their Senses in the Lives of other People ; and, through Self-partiality, are apt to imagine themselves full as good as, if not better than, they ; and therefore sit down with a thorough Self-Complacency, presuming their Work is already done. Whereas Men of Sense, be they ever so good, are not vain and elate with Goodness, but rather diffident of it and themselves ; and therefore they are still pressing on to higher Degrees of Piety, because they form in their Minds an Idea of Perfection. And this being the Test whereby they judge of themselves and their Actions, and finding how far the Copy falls short of the Original, they are far from being satisfied with themselves : They never



ver think themselves good enough, but endeavour to make themselves as good as they can be.

It is true, several in the lower Rank and Condition of Life have neither Leisure nor Capacity to attain to any competent Degrees of Knowledge or Learning; and therefore are not qualified to fill such Stations as allow of the Exercise of sublime, heroic, and extensive Virtues; but still a large Field is open for their Progress and Improvement. They may grow more regular in their Attendance on the sacred Ordinances; more disposed to receive Instruction from their Teachers, more industrious in their Callings, more friendly to their Neighbours, more patient under Provocations, more resigned to the Dispensations of Providence. If Men's Hearts be truly dedicated to God's Service, he will measure their Work, not by the Value it may have in itself, but by the Proportion it bears to their Abilities. In the Kingdom of Christ there is neither *Barbarian nor Scythian, neither bond nor free*; all the Distinction *there* is founded on the *inward Condition* of the Mind: True Liberty *there* is a Freedom from the Slavery

of Sin; true Nobility is to excel in Virtue.

So far then ought we to be from considering this Life as a dull, confined Round of the same insignificant Trifles, that we ought to look upon it as an indefinite Line; wherein every Step we take is, or ought to be, an important and valuable Advance in Goodness: An Addition to that Number of good Actions, whose Sum will render our Happiness the more exalted and complete. It will carry us on till we become here on Earth a little lower than the Angels; and, by a natural and easy Transfition, shall be made equal to them in Heaven: Which leads me,

*Idly*, To offer some Reasons and Considerations to engage us in such a Practice. And,

1<sup>st</sup>, Let it be considered, that this progressive State is our *Duty*. And in this View we may observe, that the Scriptures have not determined what precise Quantity of Goodness, neither more nor less, will intitle us to the Favour of God; and, by that, to the *Inheritance that fadeth not away*;

away: It being their Design to make Men not just so far virtuous, and no farther; but to make them as virtuous and pious as possible. Accordingly we are commanded to *grow in Grace*, to *go on to Perfection*, to be *perfect*, even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect; to be *holy*, as He is holy; *merciful*, as He is merciful. The Degrees indeed of these Perfections we shall never be able fully to reach, nor is it the Intention of the Command that we should: But it is in our Power to make a constant and continued Progress in the *Kinds* of these Perfections; and thence arises our Obligation to advance in the *Degrees* as far as the Sum of our Faculties, exercised and improved to the utmost, can carry us. For ridiculous and intolerable would be the Pretence, that, because the Distance of any Point is infinite, therefore it is not in our Power to make any Approaches towards it. Truth, Justice, Mercy, Goodness, and Holiness are essentially and eternally the same in their own Nature. And since God hath been pleased to create us in his own Image, by enduing us with Reason, and thereby making us capable of ex-

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exercising these his own Attributes, which, in a lower Degree, he hath graciously communicated to us; so by our diligent Improvement in them, by beholding, as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, we are renewed more intimately into that Image; we attain to a nearer Resemblance of his Divine Nature. The Rule is perfect, that Scope might be given to the most exalted Virtue; but the absolute Perfection of it unattainable, that *he that glorieth may glory in the Lord*. Our Condemnation will not lie in this, that we did not exactly transcribe the Original; but that we did not make the Copy so complete as was in our Power. The best Conviction and Assurance then, that we can have of truly discharging our Duty, is the Evidence of this Progress in our Christian Course.

It is not uncommon indeed to hear some Men express themselves in such Terms of Indifference about their religious Conduct, as if it were the least Concern they had in the World; to hear them make a Jest of the high Strains of Piety and Goodness which they observe in others, and ludicrously, or rather profanely declare, they do

do not pretend to be such Saints; they should SER. II.  
be content with the lowest Place in Heaven.

Happy, no Doubt, will he be, who, by a faithful Discharge of his Duty to the utmost of his Power, shall obtain a Place in the lowest of the heavenly Mansions: But for Men, with an Air of Presumption, to pretend to cut out for themselves just such a Portion of Duty as they think will intitle them to an inestimable Reward; and, like wary Dealers, put themselves to no more Expence than what they judge will be barely necessary to purchase that Pearl to which the Kingdom of Heaven is compared: This is a *Covetousness which is Idolatry*: It is sacrificing the Riches of God's Goodness, their natural and spiritual Powers, to their own Indolence and Wantonness: It is doing a *Despight* to that *Spirit of Grace*, which otherwise might have become a reigning Principle in their Hearts, and productive of many generous and worthy Actions. Had he, to whom were committed *five Talents* in the Parable, gained no more than him to whom *two* only were committed, can we think he would have merited the Title of a good and

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*faithful Servant?* No, of a *wicked and slothful Servant*; *slothful*, in not making the most of them; *wicked*, in resolving not to make the most of them. In short, they who are blessed with the highest Powers, whether intellectual, moral, or spiritual, are under a strict Obligation to employ them in all the Offices of Goodness, and in Degrees proportionable to those Powers. The Command given by *St. Paul to Timothy*, concerning those who have worldly Riches, virtually extends to *them*; and under the same Penalty, the Forfeiture of their Salvation, — *Charge them, that they be rich in good Works.*

If any Man thinks himself already as virtuous and good as he needs to be; it is a certain Sign, he has not yet arrived at any Eminence in Virtue. For from thence, as from a rising Ground, the Prospect would enlarge upon him, and enable him to descry vastly-distant Tracts, to which the small Space that he had already measured bore no Proportion. Few Men will pretend to have made equal Advances with *St. Paul* towards Perfection; he being one of those Persons, that, whatever they do,  
do

do it *with all their Soul*, and *with all their* <sup>SER. II.</sup>  
*Strength*: yet he was far from thinking  
 that he had finished his Work, or that he  
 might remit any Thing of his Endeavours.  
 On the contrary, we find him imitating  
 the Alacrity of those who run in a Race;  
 who do not so much consider what Quantity  
 of Ground they have already cleared,  
 as how much still remains, to call forth  
 their Strength and Agility. *Not*, says he,  
*as though I had already attained, either were*  
*already perfect: But I follow after, if*  
*that I may apprehend That for which I also*  
*am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren,*  
*I count not myself to have apprehended: But*  
*this one Thing I do; forgetting those Things*  
*which are behind, and reaching forth unto*  
*those Things which are before, I press to-*  
*wards the Mark, (or Goal) for the Prize*  
*of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus.*  
 And it is remarkable, that he urges the  
 Imitation of this his Example, not only  
 to those of the *Philippians*, who were  
 newly entered into the Christian Profession,  
 and consequently can be supposed to have  
 made but slender Improvements in it; but,  
*Let us*, says he, *as many as are perfect, be*  
*thus minded.*

We see then how much it is the Duty of the very best of us to be always improving in Goodness, and growing in Grace; to be endeavouring *after the Fulness of the Measure of our Stature in Jesus Christ*; the only Stature to which we can add several Cubits by taking Thought: And we may venture to pronounce the State of that Man to be dangerous, and that he will never arrive at Heaven, who sits down, either under a lazy and affected Despondency of being able to proceed no farther; or under a vain and impious Presumption of having already gone far enough.

2. A second Consideration arises from the *Advantages* we shall reap from the progressive State. The *First* whereof is, that it will supersede the Trust and Confidence which too many are apt to repose in Repentance: whereon, it is to be feared, a much greater Stress is laid than it will be able to bear. Indeed *Repentance*, at the first Publication of the Gospel, was required as a necessary Qualification for such of the *Gentiles* as embraced Christianity; but after they became Christians, higher Terms of Duty were pressed upon them.



them. They were to leave Repentance as a first Principle, like as Men do the Rudiments of any Science, and enjoined to go on to Perfection. The Heathen World was sunk in such Degrees of Wickedness, that the Change to Christianity was a Kind of *moral Resurrection*. You who were dead in *Trespases and Sins* — bath be quickned. The Powers of the Mind at this spiritual Birth, bore a Resemblance to the Powers of the Body at their natural Birth; and had they advanced no farther, they had still continued *Babes in Christ*. Leaving Vice is one Thing, and Improvement in Virtue, another; and nothing is more clear from the whole Tenour of the *New Testament*, than that the Lives of Christians were to be as different from the Lives of Heathens, as Light is from Darkness: And therefore we may conclude, that it never could be the Design of the Gospel, that Men should live in that ambiguous, divided, and distracted State of sinning and repenting; of being Heathens and Christians by Turns. No Doubt can be made but Christians, by the Help of a good Education, and early Impressions of

Reli-

Religion upon their Minds, may live free from the Habits of all Sin, and from every such single Act of it as is gross and enormous. And after Men have indulged themselves in vicious Liberties, with a View of making Repentance their Refuge ; it may be questioned, whether the most sincere Repentance will not be such as they may have Reason to repent of. The Wound in their Conscience may be healed in some Sort, but it will always resemble the Case of other Wounds ; where there is never such an Union and Incorporation as there was in the original Composition.

Now nothing will more effectually prevent any Danger of this Kind (and this is the least Danger that attends a Reliance on Repentance) than being actuated by those more generous Principles which accompany the progressive State. If Men form such faint Resolutions of Perseverance in their Duty, as to leave some secret Reserve for the Admission of Sin, it is more than probable they will soon have Occasion for such an Expedient ; when our Actions spring from mean Motives, it is no Wonder if they are confined within narrow Limits, and conclude

clude in inglorious Atchievements. But when the Fear of Punishment becomes but a subordinate Incentive to moral Attainments, and the Love of Virtue takes the Lead in our Inclinations ; when our Duty is not performed with the heartless Thought of it's being our Duty, but when it becomes a free-will Offering, and presents itself as a Kind of Temptation to our Desires ; when the Pleasure we have experienced from the Progress we have made, adds Life and Vigour to our farther Pursuits ; when we are not driven forwards by the Rebukes of an evil Conscience, but led on by the Acclamation and Applause of a good one ; then will the Soul be conscious of her innate Greatness and Dignity, and we shall be so far from sinking into the Dregs of Vice, that, as a Philosopher said of his Master, we shall almost blush to find ourselves in the Body.

And as the progressive State is the best Means for *bringing* us to a uniform and unreserved Obedience ; so, which is a *second* Advantage, it is the best, if not the only Security for our *Perseverance* in it. It is not allowed us, in this unstable Condition

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dition of Things, to arrive at such a Situation as we may expect to enjoy without any farther Care or Concern. Like an Arrow shot up into the Air, if we do not continue to ascend higher in the Scale of moral and religious Duties, we shall soon descend to something below them. The Mind then is to be kept continually upon the Stretch, our Attention excited, and our Affections enlivened by divine Contemplations; our Resolutions enforced by the View of higher Advantages, our good Habits farther strengthened and confirmed by the frequent Exercise of good Actions. We are, as it were, sailing against the Wind; and if we remit any Thing of our Strength or Activity, so as not to proceed, we must of Course be driven back. The Faculties of the Mind, as well as the Members of the Body, by frequent Use, gain a Kind of mechanick Ease and Readiness; and, by Remission and Disuse, abate of that Skill and Aptness in the Performance. By intermitting our Converse with Things of a spiritual Nature, we lose our Taste and Relish for them; a Sort of Indisposition is bred in the Soul, the Parent of a vitiated and

and depraved Appetite. And hence it comes to pass, that the Lives of most Men take their Turns, like the Sea, of an alternate Ebbing and Flowing; whereas they ought to resemble the Course of a River, which is receiving perpetual Supplies: which, at the same Time that they augment it's Streams, add Weight to it's Flow, till it finally terminates in the Ocean.

But, farther, what is consequent upon, and crowneth all other Advantages, the progressive State is the best Testimony we can have of our being in a salvable Condition. There are some who would persuade us, that our Conversion to a regenerate State is performed in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye; and manifested by some extraordinary *Feeling, Experience, or Impulse*. This indeed is a short Way, but the Secularity of it may be much questioned. High and extraordinary Pretensions, where we see no competent Foundation for them, justly alarm us with a Suspicion, that the Persons who lay Claim to them, are either themselves deceived, or design to deceive others. And as we are satisfied, the Boast of *Infallibility* in the *Romish* Church has been


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been the Source of the grossest *Errors*; so it is not less to be feared, that these pretended infallible Signs of *Conversion* may tend to the *Perversion* of many weak, though sincere Christians. For as it is not possible to communicate the Manner of these sensible, internal Operations, any more than it is to make one Man feel for another; a *Criterion* will be wanted, whereby to judge whether they are Impressions of the Spirit of God, or are occasioned by the Workings of a warm and disturbed Imagination. Here then we are beset with a double Danger; on one Hand we may fancy ourselves to have those Symptoms of a salvable State when we have them not, and so may be easily betrayed into a fatal Security; on the other, though our Condition might in itself be full of Hope, yet, for Want of these significant Emotions, we might be thrown into the utmost Despair. But a Man can never be mistaken in the Survey of such Actions as being laid in the Principles of sound Reason, are conducted by the Rule, and supported by the Faith of the Gospel: whose Number are measured by all the Opportunities we have or

can find, and whose intrinsic Excellency SER. II.  
means to imitate the Perfection of the Divine Actions themselves. But it is Time to proceed to the

III. *Third* Thing I proposed, which was to make a Reflection or two relating to the Subject. And,

*1<sup>st</sup>*, From what has been said it appears how groundless and unreasonable all those Complaints are, which we hear so often repeated concerning human Life; that it is an insignificant, capricious, and wayward State; by some looked upon as a Comedy, by others as a Tragedy, and by many as an odd Mixture of both. For, in Truth, all this proceeds from the false Judgment of those who consider it not as a *Means* to an End, but as an *End* itself; and so expect to reap that Satisfaction from it, which it was never designed to give. Let us but once correct this Mistake, and direct the Scope of all our Actions to the Attainment of Happiness hereafter, and a great Share of Happiness will, of Course, fall in our Way, without our looking for it. But, by this strange  
Per-

 Perversion of the Order of Things, we take a sure Method of being disappointed in our Expectations of Happiness both here and hereafter. The Means not being employed to their proper End, become useless in that Respect: and by being considered as an End, we act according to that preposterous Conclusion, and thereby involve and embarrass ourselves in inextricable Difficulties. And hence it comes to pass, that so many are sick of themselves, and look upon Life as tedious, distasteful, and nauseous; and are inclined to quarrel with the Dispensations of Providence for not making them more perfect than they are. Whereas were their Nature by many Degrees more perfect, by thus misapplying the Powers of it, their Unhappiness would be still the greater: for the nobler we suppose the Faculties of the Soul, the less satisfying would every Thing in this World be found. In short, take away the Notion of a future State, and you leave nothing substantial in the present, except Misery: Allow a future State it's due Weight, and nothing in this Life will seem useless or impertinent: You add many



substantial Blessings; the Afflictions of Life <sup>SERM. II.</sup> will point out their own Remedy; and you will remove what is most miserable in Misery it self: And the less perfect you are, the more inclined will you be to adore the Goodness of God, who hath appointed such an inestimable Reward for such imperfect Services as your's are, or can be.

2dly, If we are persuaded of the Truth of the Doctrine that has been advanced, what shall we think of the State of those Men, who are pursuing a Course of Life in direct Opposition to it; who instead of daily proceeding in all Virtue and Godliness are daily adding to the Number and Malignity of their Sins? What can we think indeed, but that it *had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto them.* Let their Danger suggest to us the Means of our own Security: And let us not entertain a mean Opinion of the Power which Christianity has to reform the World, from the small Effects that we find it has on the Minds of but too many. The best Religion that God can give unto Man is not designed, nor can it be designed, to

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over-rule his Will ; but to impower him to give it a right Direction. Let us consider what our Religion *can* do by what we know in Fact it *has* done. It was the high Commendation of an exemplary *Roman*, that while he lived in the very Dregs and Corruption of his own Republick, he formed his Manners by the Model of one that was accounted the most perfect : Let it be our's to keep continually in our Eye the Pattern which the primitive Christians have left us ; and, by copying after it, approve ourselves blameless and harmless, *the Sons of God without Rebuke in the midst of a perverse Nation, among whom let us shine as Lights in the World.*

*Lastly,* We may observe, it has pleased our Creator to constitute our Frame in such a Manner, that we advance gradually to the perfect Use of Reason : A Faculty whose Increase we are for a long Time as insensible of, as we are of the Increase of our Stature. We have likewise very good Arguments to persuade us, that the Soul in a future State will not stop short at any certain Period of Happiness ; but that she will continually enlarge her intellectual Powers, and augment her Capacities ; purify her De-  
fires

fires, and inflame her Affections; receive new Accessions of Bliss and Glory, and thereby make perpetual Approaches towards the Fountain of all Perfection. In this, we may well presume, will consist the Happiness of those faithful Servants, who shall be found to have done their Master's Will here on Earth. And a more pleasing Consideration cannot offer itself to the Mind of Man. Ought we not therefore to conclude, that during the intermediate Interval, in order to render the Whole of our Existence of a piece, the Soul, by Parity of Reason, should preserve the same Tenor of Improvement? Let us then consider how far we are advanced in the Path of Life, and how far we have made it the *Path of the Just*. Let us cultivate all our moral Faculties to such Degrees as to render them worthy to be accompanied by divine Grace. Let us endeavour to preserve such an uniform Obedience in our Lives, that they may know no Variety but in their Increase towards Perfection: And, as we are daily growing nearer to Eternity, God grant that we may be more and more prepared for a blessed Eternity!



# S E R M O N III.

National Wickedness in Danger of  
provoking National Judgments.

*Preached in the Time of the late Rebellion.*



I S A I A H V. 4, 5.

*What could have been done more for my  
Vineyard, that I have not done in it?  
Wherefore when I looked for Grapes,  
brought it forth wild Grapes?*

*And now, go to; I will tell you what I  
will do to my Vineyard: I will take a-  
way the Hedge thereof, and it shall be  
eaten up; and break down the Wall  
thereof, and it shall be troden down.*

**I**N this beautiful Parable God, under SER. III.  
the Image of a Vineyard, sets before  
the Jews, his chosen People, the ma-  
ny and great spiritual Blessings he had  
conferred upon them; as great a Mea-

*National Wickedness in Danger of*

sure of **Grace** as the Divine Goodness itself (in Concert and Harmony with eternal Rectitude and Justice) could bestow; could bestow, I mean, for the Probation of such rational Beings as should be in their Circumstances—*What could have been done more to my Vineyard that I have not done in it?* He goes on to represent their ungrateful Returns, in the Abuse of those Blessings; and asks, in the Way of human Astonishment — *Wherefore when I looked, that it should bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes?* But, in Proportion to the Greatness of the Mercy slighted, will the Severity of Justice be inflicted: In Consequence therefore of their neglecting and despising God's gracious Overtures of making them *a peculiar Treasure to himself above all People*, in Consequence of their Impiety heightened by every Circumstance of Ingratitude, he threatens them with an utter Extirpation — *I will take away the Hedge of my Vineyard, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the Wall thereof, and it shall be troden down.*

The Occasion of the present Solemnity will suggest to you my Design of applying  
this

this Parable to the Circumstances of our <sup>SER. III.</sup>  
own Nation; and, agreeably thereto, I  
shall consider,

*Ist*, What God hath done for us, and  
what Returns we have made.

*II<sup>dly</sup>*, What we may expect as the Con-  
sequence of our Ingratitude and Impiety.

*III<sup>dly</sup>*, The proper Means to avert and  
remove God's Displeasure.

*Ist*, I am to consider what God hath  
done for us, and what Returns we have  
made.

In early Ages, when we were over-run  
with Heathenism and Idolatry, it pleased  
God to plant the Christian Religion among  
us: A Religion every Way worthy of the  
Divine Dispensation, and suited to the Exi-  
gencies of Mankind. A Religion the most  
heavenly the World was ever blessed with;  
and blessing all the Kingdoms wherein it  
should be received with the greatest Hap-  
piness, national, social, and personal:

Containing every Motive to Goodness which can be suggested: Our Sins are forgiven upon a sincere and unfeigned Repentance; and our Pardon sealed with the Blood of a gracious Redeemer. To a Perseverance in the Paths of Virtue we are allured by Precepts of the purest Morality, exhorted by the Promise of divine Grace, and encouraged by the Reward of an eternal Crown of Glory.

When this Religion had flourished many Centuries in it's native and unallayed Purity, in a very dark and unlearned Age it became adulterated with impure Doctrines, and quite over-grown with a Heap of monstrous Absurdities: But it pleased God, by the Ministry of his faithful Servants, to re-enlighten this Land with the Beams of Truth; to restore Christianity to it's original Simplicity and Sincerity.

Then was the Key of Knowledge, which had been long taken away, again recovered into our Hands; which, at the same Time that it unlocked the sacred Truths of the Scripture, laid open the mysterious Iniquity of *Poper*y; and helped us to discover, that the Boast of Infallibility tended  
to



to nothing better than to introduce the grossest Ignorance, and to make Error incurable. At the breaking in of this Light, the evil Spirit of *Popery* departed; and we were freed from those Chains in which we had been fast bound for many Generations. Then had we the Happiness to see the Church, which, by *Romish* Artifices, had been made to encroach upon the just Rights of the civil Government, become the most friendly and favourable to it. Our Reformation from *Popery* was conducted by such peaceable, discreet, and deliberate Steps, and in so strict a Conformity to primitive Usages, that the Plan of it was the Envy of *foreign* Nations; unhappy only in this, that it was not copied by every Part of our *own*. This, however, served to convince us, that the mutual Interests of our Church and State are laid so truly upon the same Foundation, that Both must rise and fall together. This we found in the Course of a few succeeding Years, by an Experience but too dearly-bought; when the Evil Spirit of Rebellion could not compleat it's Conquests without listning Enthusiasm into it's Train; and

when,

*National Wickedness in Danger of*

when, by their combined Forces, they compassed the Destruction of both the Ecclesiastical and Civil Polity. But this gave Occasion for a fresh Instance of God's Loving-kindness towards us ; when so wonderful was the Deliverance that he wrought for us, so much beyond all human Fore-sight, Expectation, or Hope, that in the Accomplishment of it we *were like unto those that dream*. Good Reason had we to rejoice ; good Reason have we still to rejoice for the great Things that the Lord then did for us.

Again were restless and repeated Attempts made to re-establish Popery ; again the Hand of the Almighty seasonably interposed, and defeated the almost-accomplished Designs of the *Romish* Emissaries. This last Deliverance was wrought for us at the memorable *Æra of the Revolution* ; an *Æra* never to be forgotten by any Member of the Church of *England* that thinks and acts consistently.

And now we have a Religion which displays itself in all the Beauty of Holiness. The Worship of God, in Conformity to the Spirit of Christianity, is manly, solemn,  
and

and majestick, without any Thing of theatrical Pomp and Pageantry: Plain and simple, without any Thing mean, indecent, or irreverent: Prayers level to the lowest Understanding, yet fit to warm and inspirit the Devotions of the highest: Affectionate and fervent, without any overstrained Flights: Composed and rational, without any Thing flat, dead, or low. Christianity, as established in the Church of *England*, I speak the Sentiments of my Heart, is the best fitted in the World to make it's Professors rationally, soberly, and substantially religious: free from the wild Ravings of Enthusiasm, on the one Hand; and the Worship of dumb Idols, on the other: On this Side, from the Crudities of unpremeditated, extemporary Effusions; on that, from the senseless and absurd Practice of praying in an unknown Tongue. In short, every Thing is *reformed* among us, but, what wants very much to be *reformed*, our Manners. A Truth we should be ashamed to own; yet cannot deny, if we consider what Returns we have made for the many signal Blessings we have received. For what indeed are those Returns?

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A thorough Disregard to Christianity has prevailed, not only among the Great (for so Men in high Stations, however little in themselves, will be called) but, by the Prevalence of their Example, it has descended even to the lower Sort: among whom there are many who pretend to be staunch Unbelievers, and really are so, if we may judge by their Lives and Conversation. It is true, Christianity is not now under such a State of Persecution as it was under the *Roman* Emperors; yet it still undergoes one Kind of Persecution, very grievous to ingenuous Minds, that of petulant Tongues and Pens as petulant; which speak and write against it with so much Rudeness and Insolence, as if Infidelity were established by Law, and Christianity barely tolerated. And to that Degree have they succeeded, that several, who have a Regard for the *Bible* at their Heart, dare not openly avow their sacred Esteem of it, for fear of being made the standing Mark of ill-bred Ridicule: forgetful of our Saviour's dread Sentence: *Whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my Words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall appear with*

his holy Angels in the Glory of his Father. SER. III.

One would think, that a Religion against which so many Reproaches have been levelled, could have little or no Evidence for the Truth of it; yet so strong is that Evidence, that one cannot reject it, without embracing monstrous Absurdities. For, to mention but one Circumstance, how incredible is it, that a small Number of poor, unlearned, and unfriended Men should go upon such an unparalleled and desperate Undertaking, as to attempt the introducing a new Institution of Religion, in Opposition to the strong Faith of their own Countrymen, whose Religion had been instituted by God himself, in Opposition to the Powers in high Places, in Opposition to all the Prejudices of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, whose Schools flourished with the most refined Philosophy and Oratory: In Spite of all worldly Interest, nay, at the Hazard of the Lives of both themselves and their Converts; how incredible, I say, is it that all this should be attempted without a thorough Conviction of Truth in themselves; how incredible it should be effected

effected without the Power of Miracles to convince others? In short, whatever Objections are raised against Christianity, I will venture to say, that as strong and formidable ones may be raised against those Branches of Knowledge, which admit of the greatest Certainty.

And though a Disbelief of the Gospel be destitute of all Evidence, Reason, or Proof, whence it is a Matter of Surprise, that any thoughtful Man can be an Unbeliever; yet so far has *Deism* spread through every Rank and Order of Men, as if all the Evidence in the World were on that Side, and none at all on the other. And, by the Presumption of their Strength, to such a Height of Impiety have the Enemies of our holy Religion dared to proceed, as to ridicule the historical Narrations of the Scriptures, our Creeds, and other devotional Parts of our publick Service by the most profane Parodies; nay, to *blaspheme that holy Name by which they are called*. Those who dare not, nor is fit they should, vent their Reproaches against a crowned Head, have yet dared to *shoot out their Arrows, even bitter Words* against him, who is far  
 I supe-

superior to all Kings, to Angels and Arch-<sup>SER. III.</sup>  
angels — *King of Kings, and Lord of*  
*Lords.* Have any of the Nations among  
the Heathen vilified their Gods, which were  
yet no Gods, as some among us have that  
great Name, *which is above every Name in*  
*Heaven and Earth?*

And now we may well apply, with a  
little Variation, that Allegory of the *Psalmist*,  
which we cannot too much admire for it's  
inimitable Beauty, nor at the same Time  
too much lament, that the Application of  
it can be made with so great Propriety to  
our own Case: “ O God, thou hast  
“ brought a Vine (the Christian Religion)  
“ out of *Judæa*. Thou madest Room  
“ for it, and when it had taken Root, it  
“ filled the Land: The Hills were co-  
“ vered with the Shadows, and the Boughs  
“ thereof were like the goodly Cedars. It  
“ continued in a flourishing State; she  
“ stretched out her Branches unto the  
“ Sea, and her Boughs unto the River's  
“ End. Why hast thou then broken  
“ down her Hedges, that they that go by  
“ pluck off her Grapes? The wild Boar  
“ out of the Wood doth root it up, and  
“ the

SER. III. “ the wild Beasts of the Forest destroy it:  
 “ Turn thee, O God, look down, behold;  
 “ and visit this Vine, and the Branch that  
 “ thou madest so strong for thyself; but  
 “ it is now ready to be cut down.” In  
 plain and unfigurative Words, the Light of  
 Christianity seems to stand quivering on a  
 Point, ready to be extinguished, and to  
 leave us, as it first found us, bewildered in  
 Paganism, *in Darkneſs, and in the Shadow*  
*of Death.*

We are not to expect, if the Christian Religion, and it's divine Author, be thus contemned and vilified, that the Servants of that Lord, and the Ministers of that Religion, should meet with better Treatment. *If they have called the Master of the House Beelzebub; how much more shall they call those of his Household?* While we were in imminent Danger of Popery, what a serious Sense of Religion overspread the Nation? At that great Crisis how were our Churches crowded, and their Altars frequented? How were they who officiated at those Altars respected for their immortal Services against Popery, by their unanswerable Confutations of it, by making the first  
 and




and firmest Stand against it? But no sooner was the Danger over, by the late happy Revolution, than we relapsed, like *Pharaoh*, who hardened his Heart as soon as the Storm of Hail was over, into Irreligion, Profaneness, and an avowed Disregard to all fixed Principles; and basely attacked that Order of Men, who, undismayed and unterrified, had stood in the Front of the Battle, and vanquished all their Adversaries. Then those very Persons, some of whom had put on the Disguise of Popery, and others skulked in Corners, and continued silent (without one Word of their favourite Topicks, *Persecution* and *Priestcraft*) threw off the Mask, and came forth from their Coverts, where they had lain hid, and raised loud Outcries against the Clergy; though they, of all Men, have the least Reason to exclaim against the Reformed Priesthood. For to whom do they more owe that Liberty of Speech and Writing, which they have abused to so great Licentiousness, than to that very Body of Men, some of whom purchased it for them at the Hazard of their Lives; who rescued us from the Yoke of Popery by disputing, writing, and

— dying for *Protestantism*; who gave their Bodies to be burnt for beautiful Liberty? And is this their Gratitude, to be continually levelling their Invectives against those of that very Function to whom they are indebted, that they dare freely write or speak at all? For, had it not been for Them, they might have been groaning underneath the Tyranny of Popery, and perhaps under the Tortures of the Inquisition.

Now though the Propagators of these Principles pretend, that the goodly End they have in View is to root out, from the Minds of Men, inveterate Prejudices, Bigotry, and Superstition; and thereby to favour the Cause, and promote the Growth, of moral Virtue; yet we do not hear that they have boasted of any Reformation which their Tenets have produced in the Lives of their Profelytes: that either publick or private Virtues have flourished more in the Nation since their Interposal in religious Instruction: that the Love of our Country has more eminently distinguished itself in projecting more benevolent and disinterested Schemes for the Good of the Publick; that we see more of Justice, Temperance, and

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Chastity;

Chastity; and less of Luxury, Venality, SERM. III.  
Corruption, and Perjury. The Truth is,   
we are not left to guess whether the contrary Effects may not have been wrought; they are, I doubt, too clearly seen, too sensibly felt. Many Vices that used to be looked upon with Horror and Amazement, are now become so common, that they are not regarded; or, if regarded, serve only to promote Jest, or Sport, or Laughter. Gravity, Seriousness, and Authority no more appear in the Demeanour of Parents; nor Modesty, Reverence, and dutiful Regard in the Behaviour of Children. Instead of assembling in the House of God to sanctify the Sabbath by Prayer and Thanksgiving, we hear of the Profanation of that holy Day in *Assemblies* of another Sort. In short, so degenerate and dissolute are our Manners become, that all the Religion that is left among us is little more than a just Abhorrence of Popery; and we but too much verify the Observation which Foreigners have made of us, that we are a Nation of Protestants, but not of Christians. And this brings me to consider,

*Idly*, What we may expect as the Consequence of our Ingratitude and Impiety.

There needs no formal nor laboured Proof to demonstrate, that Vice, when diffused through a Kingdom, and in it's highest Degrees of Malignancy, must have a fatal Influence over the whole Community, and at last accomplish the Destruction of it: We need but observe the Symptoms of it, as they discover themselves in the Affairs of private Persons and Families, and the Result of that Observation will determine the Point. Vice, in it's universal Progress, must be attended with Idleness and immoderate Expence; the sure Fore-runners, or rather the natural Parents, of Poverty. Poverty indeed, honest Poverty, would cast about for honest and unthought-of Expedients for supporting it's self, and bettering it's Condition; but Poverty, contracted by the profligate Courses of Drunkenness, Lewdness, and Debauchery, takes quite another Turn, and preys upon the little Industry that is left in the Nation, and thereby gives a Check to that very Industry: for the less secure Men grow in  
their

their Properties, the less will they labour SER. III.  
to improve them. Hence will it come to  
pass, that, among those of higher Condi-  
tion, Self-interest will be made the ruling  
Principle; which will be ready on all Oc-  
casions to sacrifice the Good of the Com-  
munity to its own sordid Gratifications.  
And, among the meanest of the People,  
what Power, can we suppose, will the  
Voice of human Laws have against the  
louder Calls of Poverty, set free from the  
Barrier of Conscience; and thereby at Li-  
berty to relieve itself by all the Methods  
that Wickedness can suggest? What are  
the Terrors of Death (an Expedient too  
that every wise Nation would, if possible,  
prevent) to those who have no farther Ap-  
prehensions of it, but that it puts an End  
to all their Miseries? And is it not true  
in Fact, that Rapine, Theft, and Murder  
have, in some Parts of the Land, been so  
supported by their several Bands, that the  
Arm of the civil Magistrate has been  
thought too weak to curb and restrain  
them; and that our military Force (no very  
desirable Support of an *English* Constitu-  
tion) has been called in to repress their Inso-

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lence and Audaciousness? In Proportion, as the Hands of the Government grow weak, will the Hearts of it's Enemies be strengthened, and greater Force must still be provided for it's Support; and the Maintenance of that must again fall on the Publick: and general Burthens of that Kind, should they ever be felt, would be followed by a general Discontent. The Spirit of Discord, at any Time the greatest Plague of a Community, will rage higher; more bold Steps must be taken to support a sinking Government, which will, on the other Hand, be more boldly controverted and controlled. And this will give a great Temptation to our foreign Enemies to take the Advantage of such fatal Opportunities, and try to make us no more a Nation. And what fairer Opportunity can they expect or desire, than to find the Nation, whose Conquest they are meditating, divided in it's Counsels, depressed in it's Courage by Idleness and Debauchery, and distressed by Poverty?

Nor will the Ecclesiastical Part of our Constitution be less in Danger from unsettled Principles, and from a general Dissolution

lution of Manners : For *Scepticism* and *Infallibility* approach close to one another, like the extreme Points of East and West : And however the thoughtful Part of the Nation may abhor Popery for it's numerous Absurdities, the humane and good-natured for it's numerous Cruelties and Massacres ; yet the profligate and debauched will be inclined to think more favourably of it for it's large Indulgences to, and Encouragements of, Immorality.

SER. III.

In the ordinary Course of Things then we see, that Vice, when it becomes epidemical, is not only the Reproach, but bids fair for the Ruin of any People.

But this is not all ——— when God's ordinary Methods of Reforming are lost upon us, he will have Recourse to some extraordinary Means ; to some more awakening Notices of his Displeasure. National Wick- edness never failed, sooner or later, to provoke the Almighty to a national Vengeance ; and this is deferred, sometimes, for no other Reason but that terrible one, of making the Execution more severe. Indeed we may have Reason to fear God's Judgments are already gone out. One half of this

united Kingdom is, at this Juncture, by the bold Invaders of our Liberties, made a Scene of Devastation, Rapine, and Slaughter; and so likewise is a considerable Part of the other: The Land before them being, in the Words of the Prophet, *like the Garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate Wilderness*. But should it please the Almighty to defeat the Designs of a desperate Set of Men, engaged in a desperate, as well as unrighteous Cause; should he send this Punishment in his Mercy, yet perhaps it may be the last Trial of his Mercy, and if we are not taught by it to learn Righteousness, our Iniquity will draw down Ruin upon us in some other Shape, or from some other Quarter. For national Impiety is an Affront that strikes more directly at Heaven, and which Heaven therefore is more nearly concerned to punish in a national Way: Such an Impiety, especially, as this Nation is guilty of, the only one of all Nations upon Earth, where Religion is established in the greatest Purity, and yet treated with the greatest Contempt. While Religion maintains but so much Ground as to command an outward Reverence and Respect, some Hopes would



would be left, that it might in Time recover it's Authority, and recommend itself to our inward Esteem: But when it has lost all Hold upon us, when we do not only neglect it in Practice, but deride it in Principle, nothing is left but that God should awaken us to a Sense of his Being and Providence, by some such extraordinary Judgment as *will make his Power to be known.* ——— Which brings me to consider,

III<sup>dly</sup>, The proper Means whereby we may hope to avert God's Displeasure.

And wherewithal shall a People laden with Iniquity appear before the Lord to turn away his Wrath, and to arrest the Hand of Vengeance lifted up for their Destruction? Hear the Almighty's own gracious Declaration — *At what Instant I speak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom to pluck up and to pull down, and destroy it; if that Nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them. God's Mercy is over all his Works; but Nations and Kingdoms are the more*  
pecu-

peculiar Objects of his providential Care. This is not less agreeable to the Researches of Reason, than it is to the more sure Reports of the Spirit of Truth speaking in our holy Religion: *If not a Sparrow falls to the Ground without the Will of our heavenly Father*, how much more does his Providence watch over Man, who is *of more Value than many Sparrows*? How much more still over those larger Communities, in whose Calamities the most faithful and best of his Servants must be involved? But how much farther can we expect his Mercy should extend than this, that even when their Reformation is so far despaired of, that he has denounced Judgment against them; yet he is willing to reverse the Sentence, on the easy Condition of their turning from the Evil? Now National Evil is the common Stock of Evil to which every Individual contributes his Share. As we then make a Part of the Nation, our Sins must make a Part of the National Guilt; and consequently none of us can think ourselves unconcerned in the important Work of a National Reformation. In vain would we endeavour  
to

to remove the Burthen from ourselves by SER. III.  
pretending, our Betters are as bad or  
worse than we are ; since we do not know  
how far the Consequences of any one  
Vice may increase the Measure of that  
Iniquity from which, when it is filled up,  
we can expect nothing less than a final  
Destruction.

We have, I trust, not more out of a  
proper Regard to publick Authority, than  
in Compliance with our own pious Inclina-  
tions, prostrated ourselves before the  
Throne of Grace, to call down, by our  
Prayers, the Mercies of God upon this  
sinful Nation ; to beseech him, that though  
he *should* be pleased to *chasten and correct*  
*us* ; yet *that he would not finally give us*  
*over unto Death* : But let us remember,  
that those very Prayers, without Amend-  
ment of Life, would be an *Abomination*  
*to the Lord* : For what do we pray for,  
but that God would be pleased to accept  
our sincere Repentance ? And how can  
that Repentance be accounted sincere, that  
does not produce a Reformation of our  
Manners ?

Our


Our Sins are the greatest Enemies that we have to fear ; even Rebellion, unless the Sword should receive a judicial Commission from God, is not so much to be dreaded. Rebellion is like a Hurricane ; which, however big with formidable Evils, is often of no long Duration, but Things settle again into Order and Regularity : It alarms the Nation, and puts every well-affected Person upon making a resolute Stand against it. But Irreligion paves the Way for such a Train of Vices as by Degrees sap and undermine the whole Constitution. Though it works our Ruin in a slower, yet it is in a surer Way. If the one be like a raging Fever in the Body, the other is like a slow, lingering Consumption ; a flattering but a fatal Distemper, making us think all is well, when we are every Day making nearer Approaches to our Dissolution.

Let us then return to those Principles from which there has been a most dreadful Falling-off. *Let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith*, and in it the well-grounded *Hope of a blessed Immortality through Jesus Christ*. Christian Principles are the surest, I may say the sole Foundation

tion on which a true Reverence to God SERM. III.  
can be laid. These will therefore make  
us the best Men, and thereby the most  
faithful Subjects of the King, and the  
truest Lovers of our Country, by speak-  
ing most home to our Conscience.

And for our Encouragement in the  
Exercise of true Piety, and an unspotted  
Innocence of Life, let us remember, that  
hereby we shall not only secure our own  
Salvation, and by our good Example set  
forward the Salvation of others, but may  
likewise be found of the Number of those  
few Persons, for whose Sake it may please  
the Almighty to spare the whole Nation.  
Virtue does not receive a Value from, but  
gives a true Value to Greatness: And  
however it may be placed more commo-  
diously for Observation among those of  
Distinction; yet in the Sight of God it is  
of as great Value among those of lower  
Condition. *God is no Respector of Per-  
sons.*

It was said by a monarch, who was a  
Papist in Disguise, that he owned the Re-  
formed Religion was much better than the  
Popish; but those of that Communion

SER. III.  seemed to be in earnest about their Religion; but we seemed to be in jest about our's. How far they may be in earnest about their's, I know not: but that we too many of us seem to be in jest about our's is, I doubt, too true. Let us remove this Reproach by a constant Attendance on each religious Duty in the publick Assembly, in our Families, and in our Closets: And let the Purity of our Church's Doctrines appear in the Purity of our Lives: And God grant that the holy Scriptures may recover their deserved Esteem among us, that we may so attend to the Voice of God speaking to us by his Prophets, the Apostles, and his Son Jesus Christ, that all the *People may hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously!*

*The End of the* SERMONS.



THREE LETTERS

TO A

FRIEND

ON THE

*Satisfaction of* CHRIST:

Wherein are *occasionally* considered

The *Infinity* of the DEITY,  
His *Eternity, Prescience, &c.*



A





# The First LETTER, &c.

DEAR SIR,

**Y**OU sum up the Force of your first Objection against the *Satisfaction* thus: “What-  
 “ ever *Distinction* there is in the *Di-*  
 “ vine *Nature*, yet it is a *Distinction*  
 “ which enters not into the *Essence*  
 “ of that *Nature*. If then God the  
 “ Son be *truly* God, and God the  
 “ Son *suffered* in our stead for the  
 “ Sin of Man committed against  
 “ God; then the Consequence must  
 “ be, that *God suffered* for a Crime  
 “ committed against God.” In An-  
 fwer to this,

*First*, Let it be observed, that God did not, *could not suffer* at all. The only Thing, that the second Person

in the Blessed Trinity did, was this ; by assuming our Nature, and by a *personal Union* with it, he ennobled and exalted it so far, as to make it a *meritorious* Sacrifice. The *Godhead* then did not *satisfy*, It only empowered and enabled the *Human Nature* to satisfy the *Divine*, by stamping a Value upon it. And pray where is the Absurdity of this Procedure? If you say, that the *Satisfaction* in the last Resort terminates in God ; I answer, so all *our* Sufficiency and Power does too. He is the Party *pleasing*, and the Party *pleased* ; since He gave and upholds every Power and Faculty that we have. It is not sufficient to reply, that *we* co-operate with God : because, the *Human Nature* did act in *Concert* with the *Divine* in the Case  
now

now under Consideration. In short, God as well enables every One to *please* him, as he enabled Christ's *Human Nature* to *satisfy* Him.

*Secondly*, Let it be supposed that the *Divine Nature*, as *personalized* in Christ, satisfied the *Divine Nature* as *personalized* in the Father. You tell me, “ That my Case of  
“ two Kings jointly-reigning, One  
“ of which foregoing his Right  
“ makes Satisfaction to the Other for  
“ an Offence committed against  
“ Both, doth not come up to the  
“ Point: because They are *two se-*  
“ *parate Beings*” (for that is your  
Meaning) “ though their *Authority*  
“ be the *same*.”

Now, Sir, when we consider the Divine Nature I know of no Case, that can be exactly parallel to what

concerns it. Whatever Case you can imagine, it will have no Property of an exact Parallel, except it be *this*; that the two Cases, like Parallel Lines, will never meet.

But then, either Arguments from *Human* to *Divine* are *inconclusive*, or they *are not*. If they are *inconclusive*, then you cannot infer a Contradiction in *one* Nature from what is a Contradiction in *another*, and quite different Nature. No more than a Blind Man ought to conclude, that what is a Contradiction as to *Touch*, must be a Contradiction as to *Sight*. You must not infer that, since it is an Absurdity for a *Man* to satisfy *Himself*, therefore it is an Absurdity for the *Godhead*, branched out into Three Persons, to satisfy *Itself*: This being to argue *à pari*,  
where

where there is an infinite Disparity :  
It is the Fallacy called *Transitio à  
Genere ad Genus*.

But if you will contend, that Arguments *ab Humanis ad Divina* are *conclusive*, notwithstanding there must be a boundless Disproportion in all Debates concerning the *Substance* and *Personality* of the Divine Nature infinitely surpassing Human Comprehension ; then I hope *my* Parallel may be intitled to the same Degree of Favour, to which *others* are, though not *exactly* corresponding.

Your Exception against the Parallel does not serve your Purpose. For though the *Substance* of the two Kings is *different*, *that* of the Trinity *one and the same* ; yet I challenge you to prove, that the *Actions*

of the Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity may not be as truly *distinct*, as the *Actions* of One King are from those of the Other.

If then the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are invested with a Power of *acting distinctly*; if *receding* from *personal* Right to Punishment and *making* Satisfaction, are distinct Actions from *insisting* upon Right and *receiving* Satisfaction; then the Son might have as truly a Power to *forego* his Right, and to *satisfy*, and the Father to *accept* of the Compensation, as in the Case of the two Kings jointly-reigning.

Either you must say, that the three Persons are not empowered to act *distinctly*, or you will never be able to prove from the *Unity* of the Divine Substance, that the One Person

son

son might not *make*, and the other *receive*, Satisfaction ; which are *distinct Actions*. To use your own Words with a little Variation ; the Party *offended*, namely *One* of the *Two* Persons, forgives, out of *pure Mercy*, *His* Share of the Offence, and satisfies only for *that* Share of it which belongs to the *Other*, who is likewise a *distinct* Person, *offended*. To view the Matter in a true Light therefore, you must strike off *One* of the Persons from *any* Share of Right to the *Punishment*, viz. *That* Person whom you suppose to have forgiven, &c. Thus though the *same Nature* to which the Offence is *given*, as existing in the Son, is supposed to make Satisfaction to the *same Nature*, as existing in the Father ; yet the *Person satisfying*, and  
the

the *Person satisfied*, are still kept *distinct*.

What seems to have led you into your Mistake is this; that you suppose, whatever *Distinction* there is in the Divine Nature, yet it is a *Distinction* which enters not into the *Essence* of that Nature. But this, I doubt, is not sound Divinity; for the *Essence* is *distinct*, or *distinguished*, though not *divided*, by the personal Properties. Each Person is an intelligent acting Substance invested with the *distinctive* Characters of *I, Thou, He*; and with personal Properties and Relations, not distinguishable into more intelligent Agents. *This* Person is distinct Substance, *that* Person distinct Substance, but yet not *Substances* but *one Substance*: because *Substance* and *Sub-*



*stance in Union* does not make *Substances*: Otherwise, upon a Supposition that every Being which exists is *extended*, there would be no such Thing as a Being strictly *one* in the whole Universe: Because every Being which is extended consists of *Substance* and *Substance*. The Substance of God is in *Heaven*, on the *Earth*, pervades the *Sun*, *Moon*, &c. because it *acts* in all those Places. Nothing can *act* where it *is not*; neither can there be any *Power* where there is no *Substance*: for that would be a powerful *Nothing*. Now the Divine Substance pervading the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Earth*, is but *one* Substance; just as the three Persons constitute *one* Divine Nature; and yet the *Substance* which pervades the *Sun* must be *distinct*,  
though

though not *divided*, from that which pervades the *Earth*; and that which pervades the *Moon* distinct from Both; so distinct, that the *One* is not the *Other*; so *distinct* as it may be said, Substance *here*, and Substance *there*.

You see then, that the *Unity* of the Divine Substance does not necessarily exclude *all Distinction*. And, even upon a Supposition of *Non-Extension*, if you allow the Deity to *BE where* He acts; the same Method of Reasoning will take Place, and the same Consequence will follow.

To make the Deity *one Person*, the Divine Substance must be supposed to be undistinguished into *more* intelligent Agents than *one*, having the distinctive Characters, &c.  
and

and that it is thus undistinguished can never be proved: But to make the Deity *one Substance* it is sufficient, that though there be *this Substance* and *that Substance*, yet there is no *Disunion* of *this* from *that*: because we never call any Thing *Substances*, except where the Parts are *disjointed* or *separable*. Each Person then is Essence or Substance distinguished with appropriate Characters; and *more Persons* are *more Substances*, where the Substance is *divided*, and not otherwise.

Now to apply this: Try the whole Force of your *Metaphysics*, you will never, by any necessary Connexion of Ideas, make out; that *this Substance* invested with distinct Properties, Relations, &c. may not (waving his Right to Punishment)  
make

make Satisfaction to *that* Substance however-closely united.

If we should suppose *one* pure immaterial created Substance with *two* distinct *Consciousnesses*, which, according to Mr. LOCKE, would make *two Persons*, and whatever else is necessary (if any thing else be necessary) to make two Subsistences; I do not see that it would, in that Case, be any Contradiction for the *One* to make Compensation to the *Other* for an Offence against *Both*.

I am sensible that I have gone beyond my Line, as well as you. But I think I have a very good Apology to make. If I should see a Person, for whom I had as great a Regard as one Man can have for another, wading beyond his Depth, and in imminent Danger of sinking and  
being

being lost ; I am excuseable if I venture after him with a Design to rescue him and bring him safe to Land ; though my Attempt should be attended with some Danger to myself.

After all, I think the Doctrine of the *Satisfaction*, in the main, easy enough ; except it be to Those who *desire* to know more than they *can* ; or *pretend* to know more than they *do* : viz. as I said before, that the *second* Person in the Trinity as *truly* satisfied the *first* Person (though after a quite *different* Manner) as the Son of a King reigning jointly with his Father, may satisfy his Father for Disloyalty to Both. It is easy enough, I say, if we will rest in Generals. But if we will come to Particulars, if we must enter into the  
*Mi-*

*Minutiæ* of it ; as, *how* there can be a *triple Distinction* of Substance in the Deity, and yet not *three* Substances, but *one*? and, *how this* distinct personalized Substance made an expiatory Sacrifice to *that* Substance? What Wonder is it, if *here* we are as much lost in endless Mazes, as we are *whenever* the *Divine Essence* is the Subject of our Enquiries. In Matters of so high a Sphere, sufficient to turn the Edge of the acuteſt Wit, and to baffle the Force of the ſtrongeſt Underſtanding, all our *Knowledge* is but acquired Ignorance. We learn to know, that we know little or nothing about the Matter. The

*Faciunt næ intelligendo, ut nihil intelligant ;*

is never more applicable than here ; when we are making Excursions as it were into *Terra Incognita*.

But perhaps we have raised a Dust, and then complain we cannot see. The Question may be wrong stated : Let us try it thus. Vengeance does not belong to God *as the Party offended* ; because Punishment does not belong to any *Party* as the *Party offended*. For if it did, then every Person *as offended* would have a Right to punish ; and no Person that was *not offended* has any Right to punish. But the Right of avenging is vested in God as the supreme *Law-giver* ; and particularly in the Father, as he is the Fountain-head of the Deity, and supreme in Office. The Deity then is not to be considered, *in this Case*, as the *Party offended*, and

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at

at the same Time the Party *appeasing* and *satisfying* itself, in a *strict, literal* Sense: But the *first* Person of the Deity is to be considered as *appointing*, and the *second* Person as *executing*, a *satisfactory* Scheme of making his Hatred of Sin consistent with the Forgiveness of the Sinner; and consulting the *Summa Rerum*, at the same Time that he shewed his particular Regard to this Speck of the Creation.

We know not how far *our* State might affect the State of *other* rational Beings in other Parts of the Creation, how far it might countenance a Rebellion, and give Intellectual Beings of a higher Rank disadvantageous Notions of their sovereign *Legislator*, if a Set of insignificant Creatures should, after oft-repeated  
Breaches



Breaches of his Laws, be admitted to a State of eternal Happiness without any Punishment, *personal* or *vicarious*. A Law without a Sanction is no binding Law; that is, it is *no* Law at all. Sanctions without One to put them in Execution are *no* Sanctions. If then God has made Laws, has enforced them with Sanctions, he must put those Sanctions in Force; at least, they must not be such pitiful and slender Fences, that any-one may over-leap them as often as he pleases, and yet escape, upon his Repentance, with Impunity.

We view the Deity then in a wrong Point of Light, when we reflect upon Him as the *Party satisfying himself*. We perhaps should rather regard him as the great *Legislator* of the whole, himself laying

and executing a stupendous Plan to secure the Honour of his Laws, and the Authority of his Government: a Plan so extraordinary and amazing, that no Set of *Spiritual* Beings should, upon any Temptation to a Revolt, have any Reason to expect the like Favour; and so sufficient as to leave no Room for Cavil; at least to those enlightened Beings, who see farther than the mere Shell and Surface of it.

If, because we do not see the whole Compages of Divine Providence, but only some Parts of it detached from the rest, we are unable to judge of the *ordinary* Steps of the Divine Conduct, we must be far more incompetent Judges of the extraordinary Measures which he takes. But I need not dwell upon this.

You

You will readily own, that we no more are able to know what God should *do* with Regard to the whole Creation, than we are able to *know* the whole Creation. I shall only observe farther, that some Men have dealt with *Providence*, as others do with the *Scriptures*; who pick out some loose, disjointed Sentences, which, by *themselves* and *independently* of the rest, look unpromising and unaccountable; but yet are very proper and beautiful when we consider the *whole* Thread, Contexture and *Dependence* of one Thing upon another. But this is foreign to the Question.

I proceed to your next Objection, viz. “that if the Godhead did not suffer, then Christ is dead in vain.” I have not put down your *Dilem-*

*ma*; because I have already granted the first Part of it. And as to the second Part of it, I dare not determine, till I have had more Leisure to examine, whether our Saviour's Sacrifice was *infinitely* meritorious. It is enough at present to say, that it was *so far* meritorious, as to answer the Ends of God's All-wise Government; and to fulfil the Terms which the Almighty's manifold Wisdom, unalterable Justice, and essential Holiness required. That our Saviour could not merit *so far*, by an inimitable Original of disinterested Love and unconceivable Goodness, in assuming human Nature; in letting that Nature, thus endeared to him by a most intimate Conjunction, be exposed to Variety of Insults and Outrages; in dignifying that Nature  
by

by a strict and vital Union ; in advancing it to a sinless Perfection, and then offering it up without Spot or Blemish ; That he could not merit *thus far*, I say, it is incumbent upon you to deduce *à priori* from *intrinsic* Evidence. We imagine, that since God must make a *Distinction*, where there is a *Difference* ; since there is a *Difference* between the Angels that sinned not, and Men who all have sinned, and *fallen short of the Glory of God* ; We could not have been entitled to the Happiness of the Angels, or made *ισάγγελοι* (equal to the Angels that kept their first Station) unless the Merits of our Saviour had been placed to our Account.

Be that as it will, this is certain ; that Repentance in itself, *intrinsi-*

cally considered, cannot be so acceptable to God as *unsinning* Obedience; and therefore there *must* be something *extrinsic* to make it so. Here then you see the *Necessity* of a Satisfaction, which in one Place, I think, you question.

But you can no more demonstrate, that the *Fulness of the Godhead, which dwelt in our Saviour bodily* (the Human Nature being assumed into a strict Personality with the Divine) *could* not dignify and exalt his Human Nature, as to sinless Perfection, so to such an uncommon Degree of Merit, as to make it sufficient to atone for Us; this, I say, you can no more demonstrate, than you can demonstrate the utmost *Extent* of the Divine Power, which was vested in *God, manifested in the Flesh*; or shew the  
the

the *Manner* of the Personal Union.

It is allowed by you, and it is very easy to make it out, that no *created* Being can *merit* : since if such a Being undertook this Province *without Appointment*, it must have been the Height of Presumption, to have imagined that any Thing He could have done, (which must, as you well express it, *have been disproportionate to the Favours received*,) could have been an Equivalent for the Sins of a whole World ; if such a Being *was appointed*, it would have been made His strict and indispensable Duty. Every Creature shines with borrowed Light, with Merit not his own ; that is, with no Merit at all. Creatures have nothing independent of their Creator.

But this was not the Case as to our Saviour. He being not a *mere Creature* could, out of his *own peculiar Fund*, discharge our Debt. He had an *independent Power* over his *Human Nature*. He *had Power to lay it down, and Power to take it up*. You see then the Process. Some *Merit* was required to render our Repentance, what it could not be in itself, *as acceptable to God as unfinning Obedience*. — No mere Creature *could* merit, as having nothing of its own — The *Word made Flesh* might merit —

The Doctrine of the *Satisfaction* and Merits of our Saviour is clogged indeed with *Difficulties*; but it does not imply a *Contradiction* — since it can never be disproved, but that there is as much Consistence between  
the



the *Unity* of the *Substance*, and a *threefold Distinction* of *Persons*; as there is (upon the Supposition of *Extension* of the Godhead) between the *Unity* of *Substance*, and yet a Substance *here*, as in the Earth; and a Substance *there*, as in the Sun. — There is therefore as real and substantial a *Distinction* of the *three* Persons in the *Divinity*, as there is of *three* Persons among *Men*, though after a quite different Manner — And therefore *one* Person in the Deity might as truly atone to *another*, though after a quite different Manner, as *one* Man may satisfy *another* for a third — The General Notion then of this Doctrine is easy and plain; but the Particularities and *Minutiæ* of it are, perhaps, as perplexing, as those of the *Modus* of the

the Divine *Omnipresence*, *Eternity*, *Prescience*, &c. Just as a blind Man may have a *general* confused Idea of Colour; namely, that it is a Sensation occasioned by some subtle Matter, which, acting on the Eye, communicates it's Motion to the Optick Nerves: and from thence is propagated to the Brain; where it causes different Impressions. And he may *believe* there is such a Sensation upon *Testimony*: But he cannot *frame* any *distinct particular* Idea about it that is not big with Absurdities.

I have over-looked some Things in your second Objection; and nothing, but a Regard for whatever comes from *you*, could induce me to consider your third, which is as follows: “ That if God the Son offered

“ fered to make the Atonement, and  
“ the Sacrifice of himself was a Sa-  
“ tisfaction commenfurate to the De-  
“ merit committed, then it was not  
“ *Mercy* but *Justice* in God to ac-  
“ cept of this *adequate* Satisfaction.”

If both your Premises were true  
(which is not the Case) yet your In-  
ference is wrong. Because God  
needed not to have accepted any Sa-  
tisfaction, adequate or inadequate,  
except upon a *Supposition* of *His own*  
*Appointment*. For the *Guilt* being  
*our's*, he might have infisted, that  
the *Punishment* should be *our's*  
too. But how do you reconcile your  
first Proposition with this Text?  
*God so loved the World, that he gave*  
*his only begotten Son, &c.* God's  
*Mercy* (the Riches of his Mercy)  
was then sufficiently shewn in *ap-*  
*pointing*

*pointing the Satisfaction; His Wisdom in contriving it, and His Justice in not accepting Mankind without it. Thus all his Attributes act in Concert.*

Your last Objection runs thus:  
 “ That if *Eternal Misery* be the ap-  
 “ pointed *Punishment* of Faults,  
 “ committed under the *Influence* of  
 “ an imperfect Nature; you do not  
 “ see but *Eternal Happiness* may,  
 “ as justly, be the appointed *Reward*  
 “ of a *general Tenour* of Compli-  
 “ ance with Duty, in Opposition to  
 “ the Tendency of an imperfect Na-  
 “ ture biasing to the other Side.”

Now in Answer to this; not to tire you and myself with the Doctrine of *Merit* and *Demerit*; as, that our best Actions are but what we *ought* to do, and consequently

have *no Merit*; but our bad Actions, being what we *ought not* to do, *deserve Vengeance*; that, though we ought to be *punished* for *not* paying our *Dues*, it does not follow, that we have a *Claim* to a *Reward* for *paying* them; not to mention, that the *Grace of God* has a great Share in *enabling* us to *live well*: To pass all this over, I beg Leave to observe, that you have mistaken the Point. I do not know that the Scripture asserts, or that any one affirms, that *Eternal Punishment* (I lay the Stress upon *Eternal*) is the Punishment merely for our *Faults*, but for our *Impenitency* under them. You will not say, that because *Impenitency* incurs *Eternal Damnation*, therefore our *Repentance*, in *all Cases*, entitles us to *Eternal Salvation*: yet this  
you

you should make out, in order to prove a *Satisfaction needless*. This would be to assert, that because an obstinate, *unrelenting* Rebel deserves Capital Punishment, therefore his *repenting* Associate, who has deserved all he has from the Bounty of his Prince, (but yet has been seduced through Weakness) should, after repeated Breaches of his Allegiance, be advanced to some distinguished Post of Honour. Farther; I know not what you mean by the *general Tenour of Compliance with our Duty*, if you take *all our Thoughts* into the Account, and all our *Sins* of Omision.

I believe there are few or none, but who would rather die, than have their *Postscenia Vitæ* (what is done behind the Scenes within their own Breasts)

Breaſts,) their vain wicked 'Thoughts, laid open and expoſed to the View of the whole World. I do not know ſo worthy a Gentleman as yourſelf, of your Age; ſo very virtuous as well as ingenious; (I ſpeak without Flattery) and yet, turn your Thoughts inwards, and tell me, whether you are conſcious to yourſelf of ſuch an exalted Worth, as might qualify you to dwell with God, and converſe with Angels; though I have ſome in my Eye, who ſeem not intirely unqualified to be the worthy Affociates of evil Spirits.

I have declined entering into the *Merits* of this Cauſe, becauſe the Subject of *Repentance* has, I think, been exhausted of late; and I have nothing to ſay, but what you muſt have ſeen ſet forth in a more forcible,

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cible, and at the same Time in a more agreeable Manner, than I can pretend to.

Your Preface, with which you usher in your Objections, seems to contain some latent Poison, though conveyed in an artful and agreeable Vehicle. I beg your Pardon if I mistake you : but by the Conclusion of it one would think, you were going to set aside what you do *clearly* understand, *viz.* the Arguments from *Miracles, Doctrines, Prophecies*, (the main Contexture and Design of Christianity) on the Account of something which you *cannot fully* understand, *viz.* the *Doctrine* of the *Satisfaction*. “ It is impossible,” you say, “ that Christianity should be “ true, if what relates to this Point “ in the *Scriptures*,” (*N. B.* these  
are



are your Words) “appears to be absurd.”

To this I answer; that it is *morally impossible* we should err in judging Christianity to be true, since the *Proofs* are so numerous, strong and decisive; and lye *level* to our Apprehensions and Capacities: but we may very probably be mistaken in fancying That to be absurd, which relates to the *Essence* and *Nature* of the Deity; a Mystery *which even the Angels desire to look into*; and where there is an *infinite* Disproportion between the Object and the Faculty. If there be any *Criterion* of Truth, if we are not necessarily liable to be deceived in judging of Matters confessedly within the Sphere of our Reason, we may safely conclude, that what has all the

distinctive Characters of Truth (all that any ancient Records and Matters of Fact can have) cannot be a Forgery or an Imposture. But we can never be sure but that, in Matters of so high and elevated a Nature, what *appears* to us to be contradictory to Reason, may *not* be a Contradiction in *itself*, but only the Effect of human Ignorance. One Proof from a Matter of Fact weighs more with me to confirm a mysterious Doctrine, than all the ideal and metaphysical Arguments (though dignified with the pompous Name of Demonstration) do to disprove it: Because I take myself to be a competent Judge of the Truth of *Fact*.

But there are, no Doubt, several intermediate Ideas, and more enlarged Views (necessarily wanting to  
me)

me) which yet ought to be taken into the Account to reconcile seeming Repugnances, and to make our Reasoning *exact* concerning mysterious Doctrines. This I take to be the Reason why the *Divine Presence* and our *Free-will* are irreconcilable; I should say, *appear to us* to be irreconcilable; for, no Doubt, they are perfectly consistent in themselves.

I beg your Pardon for trespassing upon your Patience with a long, tedious Letter; where you must expect many Repetitions and great Confusion of Thought. In a Situation where a Person meets with many Interruptions and Avocations, it is impossible he should pursue one continued Chain of Reasoning. I need not make any Apology

C 3

*The First* LETTER.

logy for my Style. For, though this Letter, if it were to appear abroad, ought to have been dressed out to Advantage. yet it may be permitted to wait upon a Friend in an Undress and *Deshabillé* of Thought. If I have said any Thing that may contribute to satisfy you, I shall be glad of it. But if not, I had rather you should call in Question my *Abilities* to serve you, than my hearty and sincere *Inclination* to shew you how much I am, at all Times,

*Your intirely-affectionate Friend,*

From the School  
at Richmond.

JER. SEED.

## P O S T S C R I P T.

In the Body of my Letter I have said, “ that the Right of punishing  
“ was

“ was vested in God as the sovereign  
“ *Lawgiver* of the whole, who  
“ could not consistently with the  
“ common Good of the whole, for  
“ ought we can prove, have remit-  
“ ted the *Punishment* without a *Sa-*  
“ *tisfaction.*” This you will scarce  
be able to disprove. Why might  
not then our Saviour *satisfy* to God  
the Father, considered in *this Capa-*  
*city?* You will answer; that if God  
was the supreme *Lawgiver*, and  
our Saviour God, then the supreme  
*Lawgiver satisfied* to the supreme  
*Lawgiver.* But what if our Saviour  
might be *truly* God, (*i. e.* ennobled  
with all the *Essential* Perfections of  
the Godhead) at the same Time  
that he divested himself of the *Ca-*  
*capacity* of a *Lawgiver*; I mean, dur-  
ing the Time that he was transacting

the gracious Scheme of our Redemption? For to be the sovereign *Lawgiver* is no *essential* Perfection of the Deity — If it were, He could never have been without it. He must have been *Lawgiver ab æterno*: that is, he must have been *Lawgiver* when there were no Beings to give Laws to. It is plain then, that to be sovereign *Lawgiver* is no *essential* Perfection of the Deity, but only a *relative* Property.

This seems to overturn your main Argument, *that the Divine Nature satisfied itself*. For if God did not require Satisfaction, *as vested with the Divine Nature*, or, *as God*, but as the supreme *Lawgiver*; then your Argument, to have been valid, ought to have run thus: that *the supreme Lawgiver satisfied the supreme*

*Lawgiver* : which, I have shewn, was not the Case.

To be *Lawgiver*, then, is no Perfection *essential* to the Nature of the Deity — Consequently our Saviour, still retaining the *essential Properties* of the Godhead, might put off the Character of *Lawgiver* — consequently *needed* no Satisfaction himself — and so might satisfy the Father, in whom *that* Character was lodged. The rest your own Thoughts will supply.



## The Second LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER having attempted to shew, that you had proved no absolute *Impossibility* in the Doctrine of the *Satisfaction*, my Intention was to caution you against mistaking *Difficulties* for *Impossibilities*, and letting your Thoughts fall out into Matters where you could have no Sure Footing. My Caution was well meant I was afraid the *Disputer of this World* would get the better of the *Christian*. If my Fears were ill grounded, pardon my Mistake, and accept of my good Design. Though No-body can have an higher Opinion of your distinguished Abilities and disinterested

Love



Love of Truth; yet I considered, that an Affectation of *being wise above what was written* in the deep Things of God, and of pushing our Inquiries beyond our Capacities, had misled the ablest Writers, down from CARTESIUS and MALEBRANCHE to NEWTON, CLARKE, &c. into almost as great Absurdities, as an implicit Acquiescence in the common received Notions of their Country has betrayed the unthinking Vulgar. There is a *speculative Foolhardiness*, a metaphysical *Quixotism* in Men of very great but enterprizing Geniuses, which prompts them to grapple with Objects, to which every judicious By-stander sees their Strength to be vastly unequal.

Notwithstanding all your Art and *Finesse*, your Proposition, which I  
ex-

excepted to, will not, I doubt, admit of those Softenings, with which you would qualify it's Harshness. " I must own it," you say, " to be  
 " my firm Persuasion, that it is im-  
 " possible Christianity should be  
 " true, if what relates to *this* Point  
 " in the Scripture *appears* to be ab-  
 " surd." Relates to *what* Point, I beseech you, Sir ? Why ? To a Point to which our Faculties are not suited, *viz.* *How the Divine Nature could satisfy itself.* Your Sense is confined, by your own Words, to Points too sublime for human Comprehension, and resolves into this Proposition : " In Matters wherein  
 " (because they bear no Proportion  
 " to our Faculties) we cannot distinctly *perceive* a Doctrine to be  
 " absurd, we ought to discard *that*  
 " Doc-

“ Doctrine, if it have but the *Appearance* of an Absurdity.” — By what *appears to be absurd*, must be understood, either what we evidently *perceive* to be a Falshood, or what we only *conceive* to be so. If the former ; it is true, that *evident Perception* necessarily extorts our Assent ; but this is foreign to your Purpose *here*. Indeed you explain yourself in that Sense, but the Subject we are upon must exclude that Meaning. For, since our Ideas of the *intrinsick* Nature of God, the *Unity* and *Distinction* of that Nature, are very obscure, short, and indistinct ; since our Knowledge can rise no higher than our Ideas ; we never can have any *certain, clear, and distinct* Knowledge, where all our Ideas are *obscure and indistinct*.

The

The latter Sense of your Expression, *viz. what appears to be absurd*, you will not contend for : it is plain from numerous Instances, that we may *conceive*, or (if you will give me Leave to use an Expression so highly obnoxious to you) *fancy* a thousand Things to be absurd which are not so. We may form precipitate Judgments (the main Source of Error) without distinct *Perception*. We may go before the Light, instead of following it. If then you have clear and distinct Ideas of the unfathomable Depths of the Divine Nature, which produce distinct Knowledge in you ; though they must be your own peculiar Property, yet be so generous as to impart them to a Friend. But if you have not ; do not complain that I *took Advantage*  
of

*of the Inaccuracy of your Expression; but fairly confess, that your Words either meant nothing at all, or must mean your conceiving a Thing to be absurd from your very indistinct Notices.*

That you may not think my *Scheme of Arguing* would *overturn all Science at once, and end in universal Scepticism*; I grant, that though two Ideas are in the main obscure, yet they may be *so far* distinct, as that we may discern the *one* not to be the *other*; either by immediate Intuition, (as I may know a *Pine-apple* not to be a *Pomegranate*, though I have a very faint Idea of Both) or by the Intervention of one Idea or more which are clear and distinct.

Let

Let us examine these two Propositions, the one *Lactantius's*; the other, in Substance, your's. *The Divine Nature created itself. The Divine Nature, consisting of three Persons, could not satisfy itself.* As to the former, if it be taken in a strict Philosophical Sense, there is a glaring *Contradiction* in it. “The Divine  
 “ Nature not existing — could not  
 “ act before it was — could not  
 therefore create itself.” Here though the *two* Ideas, the *Divine Nature* and *Creation*, are very obscure and indistinct; yet we perceive a manifest Repugnancy in the Assertion of *Lactantius*, by the Intermediation of a third Proposition, which resolves itself into an Identical one — “No  
 “ thing can act before it is — No  
 “ thing can have no Properties,  
 “ other-

“ otherwise it must be something—  
 “ *i. e.* Nothing is Nothing.” Thus,  
 though our Ideas of the Deity ———  
*Eternity* of the Deity ——— *Omni-*  
*presence*, &c. be very confused, yet  
 we prove the *Existence* of the Deity,  
 and the *Existence* of these his Attri-  
 butes by the Help of intermediate I-  
 deas that are distinct, and lye *level*  
 to our Capacities: Nay, we find  
 them necessarily connected with A-  
 xioms that cannot be controverted.

Here then all appears in broad  
 Day-light. But if we turn to your  
 Proposition: “ No Light, but rather  
 “ Darknes visible.” Take it thus:  
*Three intelligent Agents ——— Their*  
*Nature one and the same ——— One*  
*cannot satisfy the other* Here,  
 your middle Term, *viz.* the *Divine*  
*Nature is one and the same*, which  
 D should

should give Light to the two Extremes, and make them amicably correspond, calls for the friendly Efforts of some metaphysical Heroe, to rescue it from that impenetrable Obscurity in which it is at present involved. And if that Term which should be the *Light* in your Argument, is *Darkness*, how great must *that Darkness be*? You should prove, that the Unity of the Divine Nature must be either *too close* to admit of *distinct* Actions, such as *giving* and *receiving* Satisfaction; or else *too loose* to make *three* Persons *one* God. You should demonstrate; that, either the *Distinction* of the Divine Nature cannot be *wide enough* to answer the *distinct* Offices before mentioned; or that it will not be *strict enough* to make the three *intelligent*

I

*Agents*



*Agents one Deity*: And then it would follow; that, because the Divine Nature is *one* and the *same*, *one* intelligent Agent cannot satisfy the *other*. The *Manner* of the *Divine Unity* is as incomprehensible as His *Essence*; and the Ideas we endeavour to frame of it are too lame, inadequate and confused to beget any *certain* and *full* Knowledge; which must always keep pace with our Ideas.

In your second Page, having an inexhaustible Magazine of Thoughts, and Plenty of Ammunition, you are discharging your Artillery into the Air, without levelling directly at me, or defending yourself. Please to remember, that your Sense is ascertained by the Subject you are upon.

To *appear*, and to *be* reasonable, are the same Thing to Us, *where* we evidently *perceive* a Truth. But *where* we only *conceive* a Thing to be true, we may suspend our Judgment.

After having explained your Words in a Sense which they will not bear, you make an Attempt to disprove some inoffensive Expressions at the Close of my Letter. I need not repeat them ; your Answer is as follows :

*If, say you, a Man of Sense and Impartiality can bring himself to fancy That to be absurd, which in itself is not so, (viz. what relates to the Nature and Essence of the Deity, where there is an infinite Disproportion between the Object and the Faculty) he may as well fancy Truth,*  
*where*

where there is none — upon the same infinite Object —

When I first considered this Sentence, I was at a Loss for a considerable Time to know, why you inserted the Words, *a Man of Sense and Impartiality*. I looked upon them as *idle Terms*, which had no Business here; and was going to dismiss them, as impertinent Intruders. But considering, that my Letter was directed to *you*, I find that you had a Mind to bring me under a *Dilemma*; either of giving *you* up as a *Man of Sense and Impartiality*; or, owning that Men of *Sense and Impartiality* may fancy Absurdities and Truth where there are none. What must I do to extricate myself? Give *you* up as a *Man of Sense and Impartiality*? No, by no Means; if my

Cafe were desperate : because I have repeated, numerous, decisive Proofs of your Sense and Impartiality. No other Resource is then left : I must be so sanguine as to affirm, that Men of impartial Sense may vent several Crudities. For a Proof of which I refer you to MOOR, RAP-  
 SON, Doctor CLARKE, *cum multis aliis* ; the two former maintaining, that GOD was *Infinite Space* ; the last, that HE was the *Substratum* of *Infinite Space*, or an *Infinite Vacuum*. Nay, the *Doctor* conceived (or *fancied*) that he had *intuitive* Certainty of it. For He says, *it was as plain to him, as that two and two make four*. But you proceed—  
*He may fancy the Proofs of Christianity to be strong, numerous and decisive, and a little lower, to lye level*  
 to

*to his Capacity, when they in Reality are not so* (I suppose you mean) *to him.* He may *fancy so*, if he pleases: But, if he will attend to the Proofs, he may *do more* than fancy. He may have a *Certainty*, that he must either *disbelieve* every Thing he does not see; or, *believe* Christianity to be true: Christianity having all the Proofs that *any* Matter of Fact has, and several additional distinguishing Proofs which *no other* has.

The Truth of the Case is this: Our Prospect is bounded by a very narrow Horizon; our Faculties are limited within a very confined Sphere of Activity. *Within* That Sphere the Proof of Matters of Fact, if any Thing, lies; and *within* that Sphere Things in the main are easy and obvious. *Beyond* it all, except some

few negative, undeterminate Ideas, is an immense Blank to us ; and *beyond* it, if any Thing, the *internal Manner* of the Divine Existence, and the *Kind* of the *Unity* and *Distinction* in the tremendous Deity, upon which the Doctrine of the Satisfaction depends, is infinitely removed. Here our Ignorance may *occasion* us to *conceive* (for Ignorance does not *beget* Perception) imaginary Absurdities and appearing Inconsistencies : either because we have no *direct, proper, original* Ideas ; Ideas *immediately* derived from the Things themselves, (which single Consideration will be an insuperable Bar to all Pretensions of a *Demonstration against* this Doctrine) or because our Capacities are not able to take in the whole Extent of this Subject.

De-

Demonstration being excluded, you know our Conclusions must be the *Sum total* of our Reasoning. And as a Sum can never be exactly stated, when any Particulars, which should be taken into the Account, are dropt; no more can the Sum total of our Reasoning be just, when any intermediate Ideas are wanting. And what other intermediate Ideas superior Intelligences may have, which have other Inlets of Knowledge, we cannot tell. You tell me, *you think you perceive an Absurdity in it*: so did Doctor CLARKE *think* he had *demonstrated*, that *Infinite Space* (or *Emptiness*) was a *Property* of the Deity. The *Manner* of the *Divine Subsistence* being placed beyond the Boundaries of *clear* and *distinct* Perception; and the Doctrine

trine of the *Satisfaction* having an immediate Connexion with it, you cannot *perceive* an Absurdity in the *latter* without *perceiving* the former. If we will not stop, where it becomes us, both you and I may *imagine* we *perceive* Absurdities : and I know no Remedy for it. But, — *is not THIS to plunge us into Scepticism?* No: because we see a plain Reason *à priori*, why Creatures, who can hardly *guess a-right* at Things before them, should not irreverently, from the *abstract Nature and Reason of the Thing* (of which they know little or nothing) pass a decisive Judgment upon the *deep Things* of God ; humbly content to *see through a Glass darkly*, till the Time comes when they can see *Face to Face* : and judging, that in such Points Human Reason



*Reason* is but human *Conjecture*. But we cannot see a Reason either *à priori*, or *à posteriori*, why we ought not to judge of plain Matter of Fact, and the Proofs of God's Existence.

This is the chief Stand we can make against *Atheism*. The Partitions, you know, between *Deism* and *Atheism* are very thin, and the Transition from the one to the other easy and insensible. A Person, that is an Half-Thinker, may stop at Half-way. But he who will be at any Expence of Thought, must see, that for the very *same* Reasons, for which he *disbelieves* the *Three Persons* in the Godhead, and the *Redemption*; he should, if consistent with himself, *disbelieve* the *One* God and the *Creation*. There is such a mutual Harmony and Correspondence

ence in the Compages of Truths, that, if *one* Member *suffers*, *all* the Members suffer with it; and, if one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it.

Pray, Sir, what do you think of the *Divine Omnipresence*? If the Deity is *unextended*, He cannot be *substantially* present *here, there, everywhere*; (except you will say, that He is in *ubi*, but not in *loco*; *everywhere*, but in *no Place*) and where there is no *Substance*, there can be no *Virtue*, or *Power of acting*. Well then; is He *extended*? But can you consider a Being of infinite Wisdom, &c. under the gross Idea of *Length*, *Breadth* and *Height*? At that Rate we might properly say, a Foot, or Yard of the Deity; and if *essential* Attributes are co-extended with an *extended*

*tended* Subject, a Foot or Yard of Wisdom, &c.

If essential Attributes are not co-extended with the Subject, then the whole Divine Wisdom will be in that Substance, which fills Heaven, and yet the whole in that which fills Earth, and so on: the whole in the whole, and whole in every Part. Do not you think you see a Contradiction here? Again, the Notion of *Eternity*, whether you admit the eternal *Succession*, or the eternal *Now*, labours under a Complication of *appearing* (I was going to say, for it is all one with you, *real*) Absurdities. The latter is a Contradiction in Terms; and for the former, see the Eighth Vol. of *Spectators*, BENTLEY'S *Boylean Lectures*, and COLLIBER'S *Enquiry*. To clear  
up

up my Notions about *apparent* and *real* Contradictions, I mentioned, in my former Letter, the seeming Repugnancy between *Prescience* in God and *Free-will* in Man; of which you take no Notice. You like not my Distinction between *real* and *apparent*; and you dare not be so irreverent as to assert, there is a *real* Contradiction between that Power in God and that Faculty in Man; and yet you cannot prove but there is a *seeming* one between them. Does it not *seem* to imply a Contradiction, that God should *infallibly* foreknow *Contingents*; that He should certainly fore-see *uncertain* Events? Be pleased then to put the Doctrine of the *Trinity* and *Satisfaction* (two Doctrines near-allied) upon the same Foot of Favour with *Omnipresence*,  
*Eter-*

*Eternity, Prescience, &c.* or, to be of a piece, reject them all alike.

All that I can say is, as before. That though we cannot punctually adjust the Boundaries between Knowledge and Ignorance, and precisely determine where the one ends, and the other begins; yet we see in general, that there is a determinate Province for our Reason to expatiate in: *Within* the Verge of which the Proofs of the *Attributes, Revelation* and *Redemption* consist. But when we would enlarge the Scene of our Knowledge *beyond* That, we take a mighty and desperate Leap into the Dark: where numerous, unsubstantial Phantoms and *Apparitions* of Absurdities (which we think stand *confest* and *manifest* to our View) disturb our Brain, and unhinge our labouring Faculties. But

But enough of this. — I beg Leave to wave the Consideration of your next Topick till I have dispatched what seems to me *more* material. I will not knowingly leave any Part of your Letter that affects *me* unanswered, except the handsome Things you are pleased to intersperse, which are indeed unanswerable by me. Let who will get the better in Point of Argument, you will gain the Conquest (a much nobler Conquest!) in Good-Breeding, Civility, and your endearing Manner of treating me. The weakest Things you say in your Letter are, when (an amiable Weakness!) your Friendship biases your Judgment in Favour of me.

You say ; that if *the Divine Nature be strictly One, a Satisfaction*  
*made*

*made by the Divine Nature to the Divine Nature, must be a Satisfaction made by the Deity to Himself.*

You either mean, that where there are *three intelligent Agents* in the same Nature, yet one cannot satisfy the other, because their Nature is *strictly*, without *Distinction*, one; or I do not understand you. For it is no more proper to say the Divine Nature satisfied the Divine Nature, than it is to say, that the Human Nature in such a *Sufferer*, satisfied the Human Nature of the *Lawgiver*. And I do not know but some acute Persons may think it as much a Contradiction for the same *specific* Nature to satisfy, as it is for the same *numerical* Nature to satisfy, itself. And some, acuter still, may imagine it no Contradiction for the *same* Person to satisfy

tisfy *himself*, and exemplify what they lay down by the Case of *Zaleucus* King of the *Locrians* ; who parted with one of his own Eyes to save one of his Son's. Here, this absolute Monarch, to secure the Honour of his own Laws, and to shew his Detestation of Adultery, as the Party *suffering gave*, and at the same Time as the supreme *Lawgiver received* Satisfaction ; and exemplified at once the affectionate Tenderneſs of the *Father*, and the inflexible Justice of the *Legislator* in discouraging Vice.

You say, “ *This Person cannot satisfy That, because the Nature or Essence is one and the same.*” I have answered this already in the former Part of my Letter, and I lay some Stress on what I have there laid down. I add here, — That, for ought you  
can



can prove, the *Essence* may be *one* and *the same*, because it is *indiscerpible* or indivisible — Indiscerpibility is no Bar to *Distinction* — What is no Bar to Distinction, can be none to *distinct* Actions — Therefore the Father and the Son may act *distinctly* in respectively *giving* and *receiving* Satisfaction. I own I am so dull of Apprehension, that I cannot discern any Flaw in the Argument, or where the Chain breaks. That Indiscerpibility of Parts, or *indissoluble Union*, may constitute *Unity* is plain to me ; or else, upon the Supposition that every Being is extended, there will be no such Thing as *one* Being in the World — The Divine Substance infinitely expanded — This Part Being, that Part Being, or else it will be nothing, (There being no Me-

dium between Being and not Being :) and yet in the Whole One Being ; because the Parts are inseparably united. That *Consciousness* does not constitute Unity, shall be proved by and by—

That *Indiscernibility*, or indissoluble Union of Parts (which either constitutes Unity, or we do not know what does) is no Bar to Distinction and distinct Actions, is evident from hence ; that *this* Substance or Being, which invigorates and actuates the Earth, acts distinctly from *that* which pervades the fixed Stars : invigorating the Earth, being a distinct Action from pervading the fixed Stars. But more of this, when I come to answer your Objections against the Catholic Doctrine ; after having confuted the novel Scheme which you would build upon the  
Ruins

Ruins of it, *viz.* *that there are three distinct intelligent Substances or Divine Beings, each infinite in all Respects; but their Substance and Manner of Existence rather similar or uniform, than united.* Before I proceed, give me Leave to ask you, why you would send abroad an Hypothesis, a forlorn, unfriended Infant, without any Thing to *support* or *maintain* it, either from Scripture, or Reason ?

To make some Strictures upon it—

*First*, It is contrary to Scripture: *Hear, O Israel, the Lord (Jehovah) your God is one Lord: one Jehovah,* or necessarily existing Substance; one τὸ ὅν for that, you know, is the Import of the Word *Jehovah*—— It is likewise, *Secondly*, contrary to Reason to multiply Beings without

Necessity. You have no Ground to suppose *three* infinite Substances; and consequently it is a groundless Supposition. *Thirdly*, Either these *three* infinite Beings are *divided* from one another, or not; If they be *divided*, they cannot *all* be infinite. For where-ever one is separated from the other, there the one must cease to *be*, (which is contrary to the Supposition of Infinity) and the other continue to be expanded. There can be no *Separation* where there is no *Chasm*, and where there is a *Chasm* there can be *no Infinity*.

If they be *undivided*, your Scheme (like a Comet making so near Approaches to the Sun, that at last it is lost and absorpt in it) must coincide with our's; which is, neither to *confound the Persons*, nor to *divide*  
*the*

*be Substance.* For tell me any Reason, why any *one* of your three infinite Substances should be, strictly speaking, *one*; and I will tell you, why all *three*, each inseparate and inseparable, become *one*. The same indiscerpible Continuity, that makes an infinite Variety of Parts (each Part a Being) *one* Being in the whole, will make your supposed *three* Beings to become so too. There is the same Cause, consequently the same Effect. Either *not any* of your three Beings will be *one*, because each consists of *distinct* and *distant* Parts; or, upon the same Grounds, by an intimate Mixture and In-dwelling, without any possible Detachment of *this* from *that*, they all *three* will coalesce into *one*. Either *not any* of them will be more than *uniformly* and *similarly*

*one*, or all three will be *united*. You will here retreat to your impregnable Fortrefs *Consciousness*: You will say, that *two distinct Consciousnesses* will make two distinct Beings; that *Egoity*, or *Unity*, or *Identity* depends upon your *Consciousness*, which makes you (mirabile dictu!) *one Being*, though you are not *one Substance*. The same you say immediately after concerning the Deity. That is, you have invested *Consciousness* with a Power of working Contradictions. For Substance must *be*, or not *be*, it must be a *Being*, or *Nothing*; unless *Consciousness* can make a Thing *to be*, and not *to be* at the same Time. Consequently, *two* distinct Substances, in Defiance of *Self-Consciousness*, and all it's wonder-working Magick, must remain *two* distinct Beings. You need-

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ed not then to have found Fault with me for changing the Terms, where I retained the same Idea: Being and Being in Union (inseparable Union) do not make Beings, or else there will be no such Thing in the World as one Being, of which we have any Notion. Because every Being, of which we have any Notion, is Being and Being in Union: This Part Being, that Part Being, and yet one Being in the whole.

To come more closely to the Point: *You* are *one* Being, it seems, because you have *one Consciousness*; and your three distinct Substances, you will say, are three distinct Beings, because they have three distinct *Consciousnesses*; the *Egoity, Identity, and Unity depending upon Consciousness*. *Consciousness* then, in your Opinion, is  
I the

the Ground of Unity, but what is the Ground of *Consciousness*? The Tortoise supported the Elephant; but what supported the Tortoise?—

Nothing can be the *Ground* or *Reason* of any Thing, which, in the Order of our Ideas and of Nature, is *subsequent* to the Thing of which it is supposed the Ground, &c. But *Consciousness*, in the Order of our Ideas and of Nature, is *subsequent* to Unity — Consequently, *Consciousness* cannot be the Ground of Unity. The *Major* Proposition is evident: The *Minor* I prove thus: *Consciousness* is that reflex Act by which I *know* what I am, &c. If then I must *be* what I am, (one or more) before I *know* what I am, then *Consciousness* must be *subsequent* to Unity: But I must *be* what I am (viz. one or more) &c. The



The *Being* what I am, is the Foundation of my *knowing* what I am; and not *vice versa*. The Truth of conscious *Knowledge* depends upon the Truth of *Things*, and not the Truth of *Things* upon that of our Knowledge. *Consciousness*, being a personal Act, does not *constitute*, but *pre-suppose*, the Personality; from which the Personal Act results. I might further add, that if *YOU* are only *one compound Being*, (you should have said *Person*) because you are *conscious*, then you put off Unity and Personality, like your Cloaths, when you fall asleep; and resume it again, when you awake. In short, Substance is what it is; one or more, whether *conscious* or *unconscious*; and *Consciousness*, which is nothing but  
Know-

Knowledge, cannot alter the Nature of Things. Your Scheme bears a Resemblance to Doctor CLARKE's: He made *Necessity*, in the Order of our Ideas, the *Ground* of the Substance, whose *Attribute* it was; and you imagine *Self-Consciousness* to be the *Ground* of *Self-Subsistence*, though the *Self* must be prior to the *Consciousness*.

Having shewn your new Scheme to be unsatisfactory; I proceed in the next Place to remove the Objections against the orthodox Scheme; which you call (not very consistently with a certain Quality, which is a confessed Part of your Character) *unintelligible Fargon*.

I hope you will not tax me, for the future, with any Injustice for saying, *You were quitting what you did*

did *understand* for what you did not (fully) *understand* —

But what is *unintelligible Jargon*? Is our Notion of *Person* such? It is at least as intelligible as that of *Substance*, which is an undetermined *Something*, an *unknown* Support of certain *Modes*. It is as much above *your* Comprehension to conceive how *one* Person (supposing only one) being infinitely-extended, consisting of an infinite Diversity of Parts, should be yet *one* Substance; as how the *three* Persons should be *one* God. The Trinity is *one Substance*, because *undivided*; not *one Person*, because *distinguished* into more intelligent Agents than one, &c. Each of the intelligent Agents is *Being*, because *existing*; but not *Beings*, because they do not exist *separately*. Distinct  
Perfo-

Personal Properties no more *disunite* (though they *distinguish*) the Substance; than distinct circumscriptive Properties, determining the Parts of Substance to such or such a Part of Space and Distance, *disunite* it, or make it cease to be one.

You charge me with *ringing Changes upon the* Distinction of *divided* Substance and *distinct* Substance. But, are *distinct* and *divided* synonymous Terms? or, is *Indivisibility* any Obstruction to *Distinction*?

Consider once more, That inexhaustible *Power* which weilds so many massy Bodies as the Planets *in* our solar System (and *beyond* it, if the fixed Stars are each of them attended with their respective Retinue of revolving Orbs) and that unfathomable

thomable *Wisdom*, which adjusts such Variety of Movements without any Confusion. Now where there is infinite *Power* and *Wisdom*, there must be a wise and powerful *Substance*. That Substance which regulates the Revolution of the Planets in the *fixed Stars*, must be *distinct*, in *Place*, *Situation* and *Action*, from the particular Substance, which bids our Planets *here* go their incessant Round : and yet it is not *divided* ; because there is one uninterrupted Chain of Being without any Chasm, Gap, or Discontinuity. Just as we call an Argument *one*, where each Link of the Chain adheres necessarily to the other by an unbroken Connexion of the Parts.

When therefore you say, that *Substance united to Substance consists*  
of

*of different Substances*, you run counter to your own Scheme (where each of your three distinct *Beings* will, according to this Way of arguing, be *Substances* infinite in Number) and to the common Sense of Mankind; which never gives the Name of *Substances*, but where the Parts are disbanded, or capable of disbanding and taking different Routs. *Matter* indeed is not Substance, but an Heap of Substances; because it consists of un-united, independent Parts. But when the Parts are so inviolably *wedded*, that there is no *divorcing* this from that; such a Being we call truly One: the Parts being *essentially united*. View then each Link of the Chain together. — The three Persons are Substance and Substance essentially united, having each

each of them the distinctive Characters of *I, Thou, He*, not distinguished into more intelligent Agents — Substance in Union with Substance doth not make Substances, therefore not *three* Gods — Doth not prevent *distinct* Action — Therefore the Father and the Son might act *distinctly*; the one in *admitting*, the other in *giving* an Atonement —

If you answer, that the Hypothesis of the *Divine Extension* may be ill-grounded; I will grant it: but it does not affect what I contend for: that Substance and Substance in Union do not make Substances, which destroys your Scheme. For, since the *Essence* must be where the *Essential Attributes* are; since the *Essential Attributes, Wisdom, Power, &c.* display themselves every-where; the

F

whole

whole Effence, upon the Scheme of Non-Extension, must act *here* ; the whole Effence must act *there* ; and the whole Effence *every-where* ; whole in the whole, and whole in every Part : which amounts to the same Thing in the last Resort. As long as the Proposition before-mentioned stands its Ground (which will be as long as there is any sound, unbiaſſed Senſe to diſcern that what is *neceſſarily united* must be *One*) the main Objections, which bear the hardeſt upon the Doctrin of the *Trinity* and *Satisfaction* from *Arianism* and *Tritheism*, will fall impotently to the Ground.

It even *compels* You to come (*no-lens volens*) into the ſame Scheme, and *preſſes* You into the ſame Service. For, what You call three diſtinct,  
 infi-



infinite Beings, must be Substance united to Substance by an unalienable Attachment, and consequently make not three distinct Substances, nor therefore three distinct Beings.

If you will be content to rest in *Generals*, without inquiring into the *minute* Circumstances, or embracing any *particular* Explication of the *Ubiquity*; this is what I advise you to concerning the *Trinity*. And indeed in these high Points we are like People upon *marshy* Ground. We may skim *lightly* over the Surface. But if we *fix* our Foot; if we *dwell* too *long* upon any particular Spot; we sink irretrievably, and the more we struggle to get free, the more we are gruelled.

What you object, in Answer to my *Postscript*, is so very ingenious

and diverting, that I can scarce find in my Heart to examine it. I had said, that to be sovereign *Lawgiver*, was no *Essential* Perfection of the Deity: If it were, he must have been Lawgiver *ab æterno*, when there were no Beings to give Laws to. Upon which you comment thus: *Take a Specimen of your Reasoning*, say you, *Goodness is no Essential Perfection of the Deity; for then must He have been good ab æterno; good before there were any created Beings to be good to.* The same may be said of *God's Justice*.—Do you call this a Specimen of my Reasoning? Sure you do not think me so senseless. The Attributes of God are to be considered either *ad intra*, or *ad extra*; either as *inherent in* God, or, as *manifested by* Him. God then

was

was *internally Good, Wise, &c. ab æterno*, before he *exerted* those Attributes: But to be an *internal Lawgiver* is a Contradiction in Terms. God is *Good* by an absolute Necessity of Nature. But then the *Exertion of his own infinite and unerring Perfection* in the Capacity of a *Lawgiver* is perfectly free. He might have created no Beings, or none that there would have been any Occasion to give Laws to; or he may annihilate them. His Goodness and Wisdom are *Essential* to Him: But his *Manifestation* of that Goodness or Wisdom, in this or that *particular Manner* of Acting, is *voluntary*. If you will say, that it is necessary to us that he should be *Lawgiver, stante rerum Hypothesi*: I answer, this is only a *conditional* Necessity; and

farther ; that, upon a Supposition of three Persons in the Deity, it is no more necessary that the *Son* should be *supreme Lawgiver*, than that the *Father* should be *Judge* at the last Day. Though the *same* Attributes are vested in Both, yet Both need not display them in *this* or *that* particular Scheme of Action. Till then more forcible Objections are brought, I must still conclude ; that what I have advanced in my *Postscript* is a good Solution of your main Difficulty.

Upon comparing the scattered Passages in my Letter, which you bring together concerning the Merits of our Saviour, I find a plain Contradiction. I need not point it out to you ; who had, I am sure, Sagacity enough to perceive it, and Candour enough to pass it by. If

If the Divinity irresistibly over-ruled the Humanity, and made *it intirely passive*, then it did not exalt and perfect, but destroy the human Nature, it made it a mere Machine; but if it did not irresistibly controul it, then our Saviour's human Nature is as much intitled to the Glory of sinless Perfection, as Angels and Archangels.

*The human Nature of CHRIST, by it's Obedience to the Will of GOD, did no more than what, as a Creature, was it's Duty to do: Consequently, by your own Way of arguing, it could not merit. The Merit then of his Sufferings, if they could have any Merit, must arise from the Sufferings of a Divine Person.*

Answer. Though the *Sufferings* were the Sufferings of a Man; yet

the *Oblation* was the Oblation of a God. *We are redeemed, not with any corruptible Thing, but with the precious Blood of Christ, who, by his eternal Spirit, or Deity, offered himself without Spot to God.*

And this Act of the *Deity*, thus offering up his human Nature, is, I think, sufficient, all Circumstances being taken into the Account, to constitute *Merit*. Because, as I observed in my former, all Creatures shine with borrowed Light, with Merit not their own: that is, with no Merit at all. They have nothing independent of their Creator. But our Saviour, who was God as well as Man, could, out of his *own peculiar Fund*, discharge our *Debt*. He, as God, had an *independent* Power over his human Nature. And to offer up  
what

what was his own INDEPENDENTLY, what was endeared to him by a personal Union, by a *free and voluntary* Act, may be, I hope, allowed to be meritorious; or else I have no Notion of Merit. Either then you are to prove, that no supernatural Means were necessary for our Atonement — or, that God would not, or could not, find out any such Means — or, that he could have contrived a better Expedient. For the first, see LAW, and my former Letter. The second is too derogatory to God's Power and Goodness for you to assert. The last seems impossible. Because, single out what Angel or Archangel you please for your Purpose, this expiatory Sacrifice will have all the Excellency (*viz.* a perfect Model of Virtue, without any Alloy of Vice) that any  
other

other can have ; and will besides be ennobled with distinguishing Excellencies of it's own. For the personal Union will cast a more distinguished Glory on whatever is so nearly and inseparably allied to the Deity, than any Creature besides can have. To confirm which we may observe, that the Son of Man is placed *above* the Angels, where they are said to be *ignorant of the Day of Judgment*. And whatever was deficient in this Sacrifice, if there was any Deficiency, was, or might be, made up by the *infinite Merits* of the Offerer *super-added* to it, and placed to *our* Account. Thus, *God was in the World reconciling the World to himself. He became the Author of eternal Salvation, &c.*

What those Merits *particularly* were, we need not inquire. A  
Man



Man may know he *is ransomed* by another from Captivity, without knowing the particular *Kind, Manner* and *Value* of the Ransom. It is enough we know, that a *Divine* Person interested himself in this Affair. We must distinguish between the *Equivalency* of the Atonement and the *Merit* of it. The *Equivalency* consisted in this, that as one intelligent Being is more valuable than the whole Mass of insensate Matter; so one faultless Pattern of Perfection is of more Worth than a whole World of sinful Creatures. The *Merit* of it, as far as our general confused Notions reach, consisted in this, not *exclusively* of any *other* Means of meriting unknown to us; that the Oblation was the free, unconstrained Act of One, more worthy

thy than any Creature, offering up what was his own, and transacting the Scheme of Man's Salvation.

To enliven this dry Subject with an occasional Reflection. I wonder why those Writers, who fancy the Scale of Being to rise gradually from Matter, in a regular Gradation, by an easy Transition from one Species to another, till they make near Approaches to Infinity, do not suppose our Saviour, partaking of both Natures, to be the *intermediate* Link between an uncreated Being and Creatures; as they imagine Man to be the *Nexus utriusque mundi*, and to fill up the Gap between the *intellectual* and the *animal* Creation. This, you will say, is a wild Thought. But we fanciful Writers, when once we fly out, *pennis non homini datis*,  
into

into that mighty Void, where Knowledge fails, will people the Vacancy with Ideal Phantoms and Creatures of our own Brain.

But this puts me in Mind of the Conclusion of your Letter. I am no more for *digesting manifest Absurdities* than you are. But I see no Absurdity here, except this be one; that Creatures of Yesterday should pretend to go to the *Bottom* of an *infinite* Subject with a very *scanty* Line. The most substantial Proof we can give of our *Knowledge* and *Judgment* is, to have a deep Sense, and to make an humble Acknowledgment, of our *Ignorance* and *Incapacity* to judge about these high Things. An *Atheist* or *Manichæan* would argue thus: Such a Thing appears to me *manifestly* evil ——— therefore,  
Creation

Creation not the Work of a good God — therefore, no over-ruling Providence at the Helm. Just so you argue ; such a Doctrine appears to me manifestly absurd — therefore Scripture not the Word of God. Whereas Both begin at the *wrong* End. Superior and uncontrouled Miracles, such as *raising the Dead, creating Bread, &c.* do as much prove the Scripture to be the Word of God, as the common *stated* Course of Things prove an over-ruling Providence. That being once granted ; you are no more at Liberty to reject a *Doctrine*, because it may *appear* to you absurd, than a *Manichæan* or *Atheist* is to reject a good Providence, because such a *Phænomenon* may *appear* to him evil. And Both should consider, whether it be not

more easy to conceive that this *Phænomenon*, or that *Doctrine*, may possibly admit of a *rational* Solution; than that what is attested by *such* Miracles should be false; or that there should be no Providence. It is *You* then that are going to take away the *Criterion* of Certainty, by supposing, that what is stamped with the Seal of God is *manifestly absurd*. What you say above, that God *may permit very strong and forcible Proofs from Miracles without being said to tempt us*, does not come up to the Point. For our Process is this —— Nothing can *unsettle* the Course of Nature in such a Train of superior Miracles, as *raising the Dead, &c.* but He who *settled* the Course of it, *viz.* God: God will not *lend* his Power, or *act* himself (which is  
widely

widely different from *permitting* a Thing to be done) to authorize a Falshood — Consequently, there is no Falshood: Unless a Thing may be at once *true* as attested by God, and *false* as contradictory to Reason.

You may say, that we have only a *moral* Certainty that the Miracles were wrought; but an *absolute* Certainty that the Doctrine is false — A *Manichæan* would undoubtedly reason in the same Manner upon his Principles; but neither of you can prove your several Conclusions. I answer farther; that though the *Kinds* of Evidence, *viz.* *absolute Certainty*, *moral Certainty*, *Probability*, are very *distinct*, when we consider the *lowest* Degree of the one (as, for Instance, of Probability or a *Likeness* to be true) and the *highest*

Degree of another (as *moral* Certainty); yet where they make *near* Approaches, they are undistinguishable. Just as in the Rainbow, one Colour falls away so gradually, and another rises so insensibly, that we see the Variety without being able to distinguish exactly where the one begins, and the other ends:

*Usque adeò quod tangit, idem est; tamen ultima distant.*

Thus *absolute* and *moral* Certainty are, in some Cases, parted as it were by an invisible Line. And though *Proofs* of Matter of Fact fall under the Head of *moral* Certainty; yet we may be as *absolutely* sure that King *Charles* the First lost his Head, and that *Julius Cæsar* was stabbed in the

Senate-House, as we can of some *Mathematical* Demonstrations.

I need not apply this to Christianity. I do not put the Issue of my Cause *solely* upon Proofs from Matter of Fact: Several others are to be taken into the Account, particularly the *intrinsick Excellency* of the Scriptures. For I cannot conceive how a Set of *obscure* Men could more fully unfold, and more strongly enforce, every Branch of Religion without the Assistance of God, than all the *Lawgivers* and *Philosophers* from the Beginning of the World to that Time: carrying it to such an Height, that whatever attempts to go *beyond* it, is visionary and *Romantick*; and whatever falls *short* of it is jejune and defective.

If



If I have dropt any Expresssion that bears hard upon you, or seems to shew the least Disregard for you, I will retract it, and beg your Pardon; sincerely desiring the Continuance of that Friendship, which I take to be an Happiness, as well as an Honour, to me. If there be any Thing that you may think a mere Compliment; it is, I assure you, not half so much as what I have said of you in your Absence. Here I could expatiate. — But when the Heart is *full* of Esteem, affectionate Sentiments, and undissembled Love, there is no confining the Pen within certain Bounds. I therefore forbear — Only do me the Justice to believe, that I never wrote any Thing with more Sincerity than what follows: That you may live long and happily,

that you may defend the most valuable Thing in the World, Christianity (and I believe you will) with your Pen, and adorn it with your Life, is the affectionate Wish of,

Worthy S I R,

*Your's sincerely,*

Richmond, June 10th,  
1731.

JER. SEED.



The

## The Third LETTER.

WORTHY SIR,

**W**ERE I to copy after the Model of your last Letter, the Contest between us would consist of these three Things: *First*, Who could say the *handsomest* Things of one another: *Secondly*, Who could say the *bitterest* Things against one another; and, *Lastly*, Who could produce the strongest Arguments to support his own Notions.

I must chiefly keep to the *last* of these: declining the *first*, because it is too *copious*; and the *second*, because too *barren*. I might indeed be very severe, but then it would be upon myself. The Arrow might be drawn to the Head, and levelled with a dexterous Aim;

but could not reach a Merit which towers to so uncommon an Height as your's. It is with some Reluctance I tell you, that it was unmanly and ungenerous to point your Hostilities against me, when you knew it was not in my Power to make Reprizals upon you. Do but become like me, *positive* and *confident*; combating your own Shadow, beating the Air; in short, labouring under a deplorable Want of common Sense: Give me but one Inch of Ground to set my Foot upon, and you will find that I can shake even the Weight of your Character. But while I consider *You* as a Gentleman of uncommon Sense and Merit,

“ With Wit well-natur'd, and with  
“ Books well-bred ;”

I cannot satyrize what is no Subject of Satyr. For *YOU* then to provoke me to enter the Lifts with you, by pointing your Raillery against me for Pages together, was (I will repeat the Charge) as cowardly, as if a Man, who was invulnerable from Head to Foot, should challenge a weak, defenceless Creature to single Combat — But enough of This.

In the following Letter you will find some Things passed lightly by, either because I thought they had not much Weight, or because I thought them answered already. I would willingly lay down *this* as a Rule to go by (though it is ten to one but that I myself deviate from it) *viz.* to take Notice of nothing *but* what is really a Difficulty; and to omit nothing that is really so; to

keep close to the Merits of the Cause, and to pare off Luxuriances.

With this View I will not defend my Instance about a *Pine-Apple*, and a *Pomegranate*; not because I think it *indefensible*, but because I think it *impertinent*, or unnecessary to determine the Point in Debate ——

I find, a little lower, you will *disagree* with me, where we do not really *differ*. The *middle Term*, you say, *is not the Divine Nature*; but, *the Unity of the Divine Nature*. Very well: and do not I say the very same? I having said, that “the  
“ *Manner of the Divine Unity was in-*  
“ *comprehensible*;” you thence would conclude, that it is *unintelligible*; as if *Incomprehensible* and *Unintelligible* must have the same Signification. Notwithstanding you, both  
here

here and elfewhere, confound them; it would be an Affront to your Understanding to point out the Distinction between them. My Account of *Unity* is, it seems, to you *very loose and indeterminate*; and you cannot *discover how a wide Unitarian differs from a Tritheist*. If you consult Bishop BULL's *Catholick Doctrine of the Trinity*, you will find, that the Imputation of *Tritheism* is never to be fastened but on those who *divide the Substance*. Suppose then a Person, who was invested with a Power of *working* superior Miracles, should tell me; that in the Divine Substance there was a *triple* Distinction: *greater* than that of three mere *Modes* and *Relations*; and yet *less* than that of three distinct *Men* or *Angels*. My Ideas  
here

here are merely *negative* — “ A  
 “ Distinction in the Divine Nature  
 “ — *not* that of three *Modes*, —  
 “ *not* that of three distinct *Substan-*  
 “ *ces* : ” yet I may give a rational  
 Assent to this Doctrine ; because I  
 cannot prove it to be *impossible*. Not  
*distinctly* perceiving the *Divine Na-*  
*ture*, I cannot *distinctly* perceive a  
 Contradiction in the Nature of the  
 Thing ; and nothing, but a Contra-  
 diction and Impossibility can be a  
 Bar to the Belief of a Doctrine at-  
 tested by Miracles. But should the  
 same Person assert, that the Divine  
 Substance was *one*, yet *severed* by a  
*μέγα χάσμα* (a great Gulph or Dis-  
 continuity ; ) this Proposition I could  
 not admit ; because I clearly perceive,  
 that what is *disunited* cannot be *one*.  
 The short of the Matter is this.

What-



Whatever is *one*, must be *indivisum in se*. But *Tritheism* supposes the *Division* or *Divisibility* of the *Substance*.

Thus my Notion of the Divine *Unity*, however lame and inadequate, is too *strict* to admit of the Name of *Tritheism*, and yet *wide* enough to take in three *undivided intelligent Agents* into the same Divine Essence. And whoever pretends, from the negative Ideas of *Indivisibility*, and *Simplicity* (or, a Negation of heterogeneous Mixtures) to prove, that no Kind of *Union* whatever is sufficient to make *more* Persons *one* Being; will soon find, that He is to work up a Demonstration, where he has not sufficient *Data* to build upon.

This would be,

“ *Parva per Tyrrhenum Æquor —*  
“ *Vela dare.*”

where our Reason will be soon over-  
set, or carried away with *every Wind*  
*of Doctrine.*

For my Part, I still own, I want  
your discerning Faculty to find out  
the necessary Connexion between  
*indivisible* and *undistinguishable*. *Dis-*  
*tinction* and *Division* seem, to my  
dull Apprehension, two *different* I-  
deas. You will ask me, no Doubt,  
what *Distinction* That is, which is  
neither a Distinction of three *Modes*,  
nor yet a Distinction of three *Sub-*  
*stances*. To which I answer, that  
Substance and Substance united is  
*more* than three Modes, and yet not  
three Substances : because whatever  
is *essentially* united, is *one* Substance.

You

You ask, “Is the Substance of the  
“ *second* Person the same *numerical*  
“ Substance with that of the *first* ?  
“ &c.”

I wish your enterprizing Genius  
would oblige me with fixing some  
certain *Principle* of *Individuation*,  
that I might know what makes one  
*numerical* Substance, according to  
*your* Philosophy.

Let me prevail upon you, to add  
this Favour to your former. In your  
*second* Letter you were pleased to  
honour me with a new *Tritheistical*  
Hypothesis, which was highly divert-  
ing; though, I must confess, not  
very edifying. In your last, as there  
is no End of your Favours, You  
advance (solely with a View to my  
Entertainment) a new Scheme, *viz.*  
the *limited Extension* of the Divine  
3 Sub-

Substance, making the Deity to be no more than *commensurate to his Works*; that is (for it is the only Sense the Word *commensurate* bears) no more than *co-extended* with them as far as they reach. Proceed, Great Sir, to crown your repeated Kindnesses with this last Master-piece of an adventurous Fancy: namely, an *Attempt to fix the Principle of Individuation*. 'Till you have done that, give me Leave to use the Word NUMERICAL with due Latitude; and to think, that it may admit of a *larger* or a *stricter* Sense.

For Instance; according to your new Scheme of the *limited Extension* of the Deity, (I know you will be pleased that I take so much Notice of a *Stranger-Hypothesis*, which is endeared to me by no Circum-

stance

stance but it's Relation to *You* : ) I would ask, whether this Substance, which is commensurate to the Earth, be *numerical*, or no? In the *strictest* Sense of the Word it must, except there can be a *Medium* between— Being and No-Being : It must be *one numerical Part*, and that is *one Being*. And yet, except you will admit as many *Substances* as there are *Parts* in your *finitely-extended Deity*, it must be in a *larger* Sense one *numerical* Substance with That which is commensurate to the Sun, to the fixed Stars, &c.

But, whether you will reject, or no, your *new* Hypothesis, I will leave you to disprove, that *This* Substance can act *distinctly* from *That* when it is *indivisibly* united to it ; and consequently (in my Sense of the

the

the Word *Numerical*) one Substance with it.

I am sensible you would be uneasy, if I should dismiss your Hypothesis thus, without being more *particular* in my Regard to it. That you may not therefore complain of my *Coldness* and *Indifference* to any Thing of your's, I shall spend a little more of my Time upon it, and pay my Compliments in an ampler Manner.

If the Deity be *only commensurate* to his Works; then, He either *can* act beyond the Confines of this World, or He *cannot*. If he can; then His Existence, according to you, reaches beyond it's Verge. For nothing can act *where* it is not; any more than it can act *when* it is not. If He *cannot* act beyond this determinate

minate Sphere, then there must be something to obstruct Him. For a mere *Nothing* cannot be a Bar to his Action. And the extra-mundane Void is a mere *Nothing*. I know that the *Translator* of Archbishop KING quotes EPISCOPUS to prove it an Absurdity, that the Deity should be in an extra-mundane Void.

“ Because to be *in* a Place, supposes  
 “ the Deity to take a *Denomination*  
 “ or real *Habitude* from the Place  
 “ in which he is. But he cannot  
 “ derive a real *Habitude* from *No-*  
 “ *thing*.” But notwithstanding this,  
 I would ask ; — Was the Deity  
 in the Void, where the World *now*  
 is, *before* He produced it? If He  
 was, then He may exist in the ex-  
 tra-mundane Negation of Matter be-  
 yond the Scene of his Operations,

as well as He did in this Void, before the mundane System was in Being. If he was not, then how could He exert his Power, where his Substance was not? This would be *to hang Power in a literal Sense, as Job does the Earth in a figurative, upon Nothing.* It would be to build Castles in the Air, without any Foundation.

*You are apt, it seems, to subscribe in the Negative to the Immensity or Infinity of the Deity — But can you really set Bounds to that Being whom the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain? Can you say to him, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther; and here shall thy Existence be stayed? This is all we mean by Infinite, viz. A Negation of Bounds. If the Deity*



be not *Infinite* or *immense*, then He must either be bounded by *Himself*, or by *some Other* — or by *some Impossibility* in the Nature of the Thing. Not by *Himself* — For he necessarily is, what He is. He cannot therefore admit of any Diminution or Increase even from *Himself* — much less can He admit of these from any *Other*, both for the same Reason, and because whatever *limits*, must be *superior* to what is *limited* — Not, by any *Impossibility* in the Nature of the Thing; for it is no more impossible for the Deity to be infinite in his *Existence* than in his *Duration*. He who is infinite in *one* Perfection, may be infinite in *all*. There can be no *Limitation*, where there is no *Limit*er. For *Limitation* being an *Effect* must suppose a

*Cause.* But *Extension*, you say, *in-*  
*fers Parts*; and *Parts*, *Number*;  
and *Number*, *Limitation*. I am not  
obliged to defend *Extension* any  
more than you; and consequently  
am not solicitous whether this be a  
just Answer: That, by *Number* you  
either mean *actual Number*, or the  
*Power of Numbering*. It is true,  
that *actual Number* can never be in-  
finite, because what we actually num-  
ber cannot be numberless: But still  
our *Power of Numbering* can have  
no Bounds, which is too plain to  
dwell upon. As far as we do *actu-*  
*ally* number, it cannot be infinite.  
But still we must conceive an infinite  
Surplus behind.

Though you triumph over me in  
an unmerciful Manner, I no more  
grant *infinite Extension* than you  
do.

do. And yet you suppose it, as well as I do, in your former Letter. I can shew you the Passage: “ I “ would not willingly suppose the “ Deity to be measurable by Yards, “ Ells, and Poles ; but then I can- “ not help conceiving something A- “ nalogous to Extension. For uni- “ versal Action supposes the univer- “ sal substantial Presence of the Dei- “ ty, and universal substantial Pre- “ sence infers something analogous “ to Extension. *WHERE and PLACE “ are Terms relative to the spacious “ extended Existence.*” Be it so ; then I doubt the Deity will be extended. For can we *live, and move, and have our Being in God*, and yet that very Being *in whom we live, &c.* not be present, *where* we live, and move, and have our Being?

From those manifest Traces of the Divine Wisdom, which appear through the whole Oeconomy of Nature, we infer that there is everywhere a wise Cause subsisting. The whole World is, in this Respect, as it were one great Temple; where, as in the *Jewish*, the *Shechinah*, or Divine Presence, shines consecret in a visible Glory. Give me Leave to cite, for this Purpose, an admirable Passage in C I C E R O, *pro Milone*, which I do not remember to have seen quoted: “ Est, est profectò illa Vis (*cœlestis*) “ neque in his Corporibus, “ atque in hac Imbecillitate *ineſt* “ quiddam quod vigeat ac sentiat; “ & *non ineſt* in hoc tanto Naturæ, “ tam præclaro Motu: ni fortè idcirco esse non putant, quia non “ apparet, nec cernitur: proinde “ quasi

“ quasi nostram ipsam mentem, quâ  
 “ sapimus, quâ providemus, quâ  
 “ hæc ipsa agimus ac dicimus, vide-  
 “ re, aut plane qualis, aut ubi sit  
 “ sentire possimus.” You might as  
 well fancy, that the Soul can per-  
 ceive the Images of Things, and ac-  
 tuate the Body, without being *pre-*  
*sent* in the Brain; as that the Deity  
 can invigorate all Nature without  
 being *present* every-where. The  
 only Question at present is; not  
 whether the Deity be every-where,  
 or in every Place; but, whether *ex-*  
*tended* or *non-extended*?

If the Deity be *unextended*, this  
 Substance which acts in this Point of  
 Space, must be either *all* the Divine  
 Substance, or *not all*. There can be  
 no more a Medium (upon a Suppo-  
 sition of the Deity’s acting in this  
 H 4 Place)

Place) between either the *whole* Substance being here, or *not the whole*; than there can between *Being* or *not Being*; between *material* or *not material*. And you might as well affirm, that the Deity is neither *extended* nor *un-extended*; as affirm, that he is neither *totus in toto*, nor yet Part *here*, and Part *there*. If you say, it is the *whole* Substance that acts *here*, then the Divine Substance is *exhausted here*, and there can be no Remainder left to *fill the Heaven*, &c. For there cannot be *more* than *All*. The *Fulness* of the Deity, this Scheme supposes, is engrossed by this Part; And yet it is not engrossed either. For it subsists *whole* in another Part; and so on *in infinitum*. If you say, it is not the *whole*, then you admit of *Parts*, and consequently

ly

ly of the *Extension* of the Deity: and indeed I would embrace this Scheme readily, if the Difficulty of *totus in toto* did not haunt it too. For upon the Hypothesis of Extension, either the essential Attributes are co-extended with the Essence, or they are not. If they *are* co-extended, then there will be Ells, and Yards, and Miles of the divine Consciousness. But if they *are not*, then, as the Essence cannot be without the Essential Attributes, they must be either Part here and Part there, which would be to make as many distinct Consciousnesses as there are Parts; or they must be *tota in toto*.

I know not how to get over these Difficulties without having Recourse to the Scheme of Analogy, which the *Cambridge-Wits*, for whom I have

have a very great Regard, generally declare against. The Deity must be a Being whom no Place can exclude, and none include or circumscribe. And if we may argue from our imperfect Ideas; Either his immaterial Substance must be all and intire with every Part of the corporeal Substance it has an immediate Communication with — or it must be united to it Part by Part; so that they shall be co-extended.

If then you can believe the Deity to be *Omnipresent*, though you cannot conceive the *Manner* of his *Omnipresence*, why cannot you believe the Trinity *in Unity*, though you cannot conceive how *three*, in one Respect, should be *one* in another? You believe the Former, because you can prove the Reality of the Thing  
from



from *Reason* ; why do you not then assent to the Latter, because you can prove it from *Scripture*? The *Scripture* was no more written to *explain* the *Doctrin*e of the Trinity, than *Reason* was given you to *explain* the *Modus* of the Divine *Ubiquity*. But you have a singular Fancy, “ That the *Scripture* asserts “ three distinct Divine Beings.” If you can make out, that it asserts three *separate* or *separable* Beings, the Proof will be as valuable a Curiosity as your Principle of *Individuation*, for which I am to be indebted to you. If you cannot ; whatever falls short of this, will be, give me Leave to say, impertinent.

The next Article is that of *Eternity* ; which you define by an *unalterable Permanency*, and an *infinite Ability*

*Ability to exist* ——— two different Ideas. For infinite Ability to exist is no more infinite Permanency or Duration ; than your Ability to answer this Letter is an actual Answer to it. You deny both the *eternal Succession* and *eternal Now* : that is, according to your Scheme, the Deity neither exists *all at once* ; nor yet *not all at once*, or successively ; and if you can believe this, *great is your Faith*. For my Part, I find it impossible to doubt, that the Deity has not existed longer To-day, than he had done Yesterday : and consequently that he exists SUCCESSIVELY : And what necessarily extorts my Assent, I must believe to be true. I argue farther, that a *Succession* of *Operation* necessarily supposes a *Succession* of *Duration*. He who *acts*

not all at once, exists not all at once. But the Deity acts not all at once. He, who created the World in six Days, redeemed Mankind some Thousand Years after; who will destroy it in Time to come, and then judge it; He, I say, operates successively: and what *operates* successively, *endures* successively. If *past*, *present*, and *future* may be applied to the *Operations* of the Deity, then they must be applied to the *Deity operating*.

This is little less than a Demonstration of the *successive* Existence: And yet I will not deny that it is clogged with inextricable Difficulties; far greater than any the Trinity is embarrassed with. If I had a mind to particularize them, I could pour upon you an Inundation of Metaphysics.

physics. But I chuse rather to refer you to the Writers mentioned in my last.

The next Article that falls under your Consideration is the *Divine Prescience*.

To convince you of the Danger of wading beyond your Depth; and that there may be an *apparent* Contradiction, where there is not a *real* one, I asked you, “ Does it not seem  
“ to imply a Contradiction, that  
“ God should infallibly foreknow  
“ Contingencies? that he should cer-  
“ tainly foresee uncertain Events? ”  
To this you reply, that *Events may be certain, but not necessary*. But can that be certain, which may be, or may not be, which I suppose is the Meaning of *not necessary*? And is not what depends upon the Will  
of

of a free Agent, what may, or may not be? Whatever *certain* and *necessary* may be in other Cases ; yet they seem here, which is all I contend for, to be equivalent Terms. Either the Deity's Foreknowledge is absolutely certain and infallible, or it is not. If it is not, the Deity's Knowledge would be imperfect ; and all Imperfection is to be removed from the Deity.

If it be said, that it is absolute, how can there be an absolutely certain and determinate Knowledge of what is undetermined — what is floating in Suspence, — what I have in my Power to act, or not to act? As to what you say below, I answer, that God does not *necessitate* Actions by his infallibly foreseeing them ; but he could not, if we may  
argue

argue from our imperfect Views, infallibly foresee them, if they were not-necessary, or contingent. His Infallibility is not the *Cause*, but it is the *Result*, of the Certainty of the Object. As to your Argument (which is very ingeniously expressed, as every Thing of yours is) drawn from the Deity's intimate Knowledge of the Workings of human Nature ; it's Passions and Reasonings : I answer, either these necessarily determine the Soul, or not. If they do not, then such must the Knowledge necessarily be as the Action (the Object of that Knowledge) is ; fixed and determined, if *that* is fixed and determined ; if not fixed, it can only amount to an high Degree of Probability, or, at best, moral Certainty : And it must be more or less to be depend-

depended upon, in Proportion as the Person acting by an habitual Attachment to such particular Methods of Action, acts more or less mechanically, or makes nearer Approaches to *Necessity*, or an Impossibility to turn his Thoughts into another Channel. In short, Knowledge must keep Pace with the Nature of the Thing. Besides, the Soul often exerts a mere arbitrary Act of her invisible Empire in chusing *this* rather than *that*, where there is an absolute Indifference, without any Influence from any assignable Motives, Reasonings, or Passions.

But to take this Matter a little higher — A *future* Determination of my Will, before it has determined itself, is *no* Determination, is a mere Non-Entity. And of a mere Non-

I                      Entity,

Entity, or *Nothing*, there can be no *Knowledge*. Consequently, God cannot read or foresee in my Soul, what is not there at all. *Q. E. D.*

But he may know what he will do *Himself*, his Will being invariable; and consequently there is no Difficulty in conceiving that he might fore-know your Existence, looking through the whole Plan of his Creation, and having a comprehensive View of all the Beings that have, or are to act their Part upon the Theatre of the World.

The same may be said of the Laws by which he governs the Material World, which are nothing more than the Deity's knowing that he will act uniformly and consistently, nothing but the Knowledge of his own Determinations. Whereas  
you



you intimate, that “ what is *certainly* past was certainly future ; and “ what was *certainly* future, might “ be *certainly* foreknown : ” Not to examine, whether there be not a Flaw, which I think there is, in the Argument ; it is sufficient to say, that my Argument is at least a Match for it ; that nothing can be *certain*, which *may*, or *may not* be ; as depending upon the *undetermined* Will of a free Agent.

But you may ask, Do you not then believe the Divine Prescience ? Yes, I do sincerely. Not because I think the Objections against it are easily answered ; but because the Proofs for it preponderate, and suffer me not to suspend my Assent. Were the *Trinity* in *Unity* embarrassed with so great Difficulties, you

would have much more Reason to reject the Belief of it than you have at present.

But, *Manum de Tabulá* — That Being who *dwells in unapproachable Glory*, is too bright an Object to contemplate, *Oculo irretorto*, with undazzled Eyes; without being blinded by the Excess of his Effulgence. I was going to enlarge, but have the Pleasure to find myself prevented by your Sentiments on that Head, which in a Letter, where every Thing is bright and ingenious, shine with *distinguished* Brightness. Your Thoughts are the same in Substance, as mine in my former, and only differ from them, as your's always will, in Vivacity, and your sprightly Happiness of Diction. There is as much Difference between the  
same

same Sentiment, cloathed by you,  
“ *quem Musæ quintâ parte sui Nec-*  
“ *taris imbuerunt,*” and expressed  
in my homely Manner, as there is  
between the Actions of an accom-  
plished Gentleman and of a Man of  
the common Rank. A *plain Man*  
may do an Action of the same in-  
trinſick Worth as the *Gentleman*;  
But then the *Gentleman* never fails  
to stamp an additional Value upon  
what he does by a peculiar Grace,  
a Manner and Decorum; and dou-  
bles an Obligation by beſtowing it  
with the Air of a Person that is ob-  
liged. Thus I may hit upon a  
Thought the ſame materially as  
your’s; But you can give a particu-  
lar Charm and Beauty to it, and in-  
fuſe, as it were, a Soul and Spirit in-  
to that Sentiment, which was a dull

and uninformed Mafs before. Free from that obfcure Diligence which unhappily diftinguiſhes the Writings of ſome great Scholars, a native Eaſineſs makes Learning fit gracefully upon you without any forbidding Appearances.

I muſt not paſs by an occasional Remark of your's upon the *Orthodox* in general ; who, it ſeems, have Strength of Reason enough to ſee the Weakneſs of their Reason *in the deep Things of God* : and therefore will believe what has the *Stamp of Myſtery* upon it. Creation and Redemption — from the one we derive a *temporary Being*, from the other an *eternal Well-being* — Both of them invironed with Myſtery — Both, notwithstanding *this* Reason, to be admitted — or both, for *that* Reason,

Reason, to be discarded. You mention some, who love to *magnify Difficulties*, and *can digest nothing till they have made it indigestible*. I am not ignorant at whom this notable Piece of Satyr is levelled, and had I not resolved to keep in the Overflowings of my Gall, I should be tempted to make an impotent Reply. But I forbear — only indulge my Impertinence in making an unmeaning Reflection, which every Body must see is unapplicable to You.

Though Human Folly, like Matter, is much the same at all Times; yet it admits of an infinite Variety of *Modifications*: it is continually shifting the Scene, and is no sooner subdued in one Form, than it starts up in another. And had CERVAN-

TES, who laughed out of Countenance, by an inimitable Vein of Rail-  
lery, *amorous and military Romances*,  
the reigning Folly of that Age; had  
he, I say, lived now, he would have  
turned the Edge of his Ridicule a-  
gainst *Metaphysical Romances*, which  
are at present so much in Vogue.  
Nothing more common now-a-days  
than to erect new Schemes, which  
are for a while the Wonder of the  
Unthinking. And when the *strong*  
*Man*, well-armed with Learning and  
Abilities, keepeth his new-erected  
Building, his intellectual Goods are  
*in Peace*——till a *stronger than he*  
*arisseth, and strippeth him of his Ar-*  
*mour in which he trusted.* How  
many fine *Hypotheses* have you and I  
seen in *Morality* and *Metaphysics*,  
which after having *flourished for a*  
I *little*

*little Time, withered away, because they had no Depth?* Whereas the Scriptures have stood the Test of Ages: they continue, like their great Author, *the same Yesterday, To-day, and for ever*; ever attacked, and ever triumphant. And when once Men, enamoured of their own *Metaphysical Reveries*, relinquish them; (just as the *Israelites* forsook the living God) they set up some vain and senseless Idol of the Imagination; and then wonder that all Mankind do not *fall down and adore* it. I add farther, that whoever has attempted to explain away the venerable *Mysteries* of Christianity, has made the Doctrines far more *mysterious* than they were before. This is exemplified by Doctor CLARKE's *Scripture-Doctrine*, &c. who has  
attempt-

attempted to get rid of the Difficulties of the Orthodox Scheme at the Expence of much greater. “*Gra-*  
“ *vio rem plagam recepit, ut levio-*  
“ *rem repelleret.*”

You see, that this Reflection is, according to Promise, undefigning. I will add another that does concern you.

Men of the *common Level* may with Reason be afraid of being lost in a Crowd. To pass themselves upon the World for Men of Penetration, they must strike into new Tracks. But *You* will always be distinguished from the *Many* by the superior *Height* and *Elevation* of your Genius. When you *do not* differ from them,

— *Humero supereminet omnes,*  
will be applicable to *You*.

I pro-



I proceed now to the second Part of your Letter, where I find nothing very material, till You attack the *Indiscerpible Bottom*, as You call it. In Answer to the Objection, *that This Person could not satisfy That, because the Effence was one and the same*; I observed, that Effence might be one and the same, because *indivisible*, or *indiscerpible* — Indiscerpibility was no Bar to Distinction and distinct Actions — Therefore the *Father* and the *Son* might act *distinctly* in *giving* and *receiving Satisfaction*.

Here I played my Cannon so briskly, that you were going to raise the Siege ingloriously; and to quit the Field in Precipitation and Disorder. But, like other Heroes, then exerting their Courage most, when  
in

in the deepest Distress ; You at last, collected in yourself, bid me Defiance. I am sorry to find your Strength bears no Proportion to your Heroism. For, wanting better Weapons, you begin the Onset with *small Shot ; aliàs, Indiscerpible Atoms*. Your *Metaphysical* Forces must be very poor and languid, when you were forced to call in *Natural Philosophy* to your Aid.

These *Indiscerpible Atoms*, by your own Confession, are not *absolutely* indiscerpible. But the Deity, if he does consist of Parts, consists of Parts *essentially unmoveable* from each other, and *unpartible*, without an exprefs Contradiction *in Terms*. For all Division implies Limitation, and Limitation is contrary to our Ideas of the Deity. He cannot be  
divided

divided without ceasing to be infinite; because where there is a Chasm (and *Division* makes a Chasm) there can be no Infinity; and He cannot cease to be infinite, without ceasing to be God. He is *necessarily* what he is, consequently if he be undivided, he must be *necessarily undivided*, and *necessarily indivisible*. By *Parts* then in the Deity, if the Scheme of *Extension* be granted, we must not understand what is *partible* (for that is only true of *corporeal* Parts) but *Metaphysical* Parts; or *so much* of the Divine Substance, as is commensurate to such an assignable Portion of Matter. And to argue, that because *Physical* Parts are separable, therefore *Metaphysical* Parts must be so too, is a very inconclusive Way of Arguing; it is *Transitio à Genere*  
*ad*

*ad Genus.* Thus the *happy Beam of Light*, which you had struck upon, proves to be nothing else but an *Ignis Fatuus*.

You tell me, that *Indiscerpibility infers Parts*; and I am sure *Discerpibility* does. Hard Fate for those who would prove the Deity *Impartible*! for he must, it seems, have Parts, if he be either *discerpible*, or *indiscerpible*; either *divisible*, or *indivisible*.

The Sum and Substance of what I would say is this — That your indiscerpible Atoms consist of *above* and *under*; of *this* and *that* Side; and it can be no Impossibility for the Deity, whatever it may be to the Powers of Nature, to separate the *Upper* from the *Under*, and *this* Side from *that*. But what can separate the

the Deity? — not Himself; no more than He would limit Himself: not any created Being; for can a created Being limit and disjoin That by which he is created? You refer to what you have said before to disprove, that *Indissoluble Union* may constitute Unity, &c. and I take the same Privilege to refer to what I have said above in Proof of it. I never adopted the *extended Scheme*; but, because *You supposed* it; in Complaisance to you I argued from it; not ignorant, in the mean Time, that the *Trinity* would stand it's Ground upon the Scheme of *Non-Extension*, perhaps with greater, I am sure with equal Advantage. Why you call the Scheme *an unfriended Infant*, I want to be informed. Can that be *unfriended*

I

which

which is countenanced by the great Names of LIMBORCH, LOCKE, TILLOTSON, CLARKE, and NEWTON? to which I add, with Pleasure, my ingenious *Correspondent* in the former Part of his Letter.

What you say below in this Page about a Contradiction, I have answered towards the Beginning of this Letter. *Indiscernibility is a negative Idea.* I am glad, that *Indiscernibility* is no Bar to Distinction, and distinct Actions. *You allow* that it is not, and I heartily thank you: For, that being allowed, each Link of the Chain is made firm in my Argument, whether the *extended* or *unextended* Scheme takes place. But alas! alas! how short-lived and fleeting are human Joys! Casting my Eyes upon another Page, I find you  
deny

deny what you before allowed ; and tell me, that *Indivisibility is an Obstruction to Distinction*. I will not anticipate here what will be more proper to be said hereafter, when I come to that Page.

I wish I could draw a Veil over what is to follow. It will be a melancholy Scene. Nothing but your Request, which shall have alway the Force of an authoritative Command with me, could prevail upon me to proceed to re-consider with great Reluctance your poor unfortunate *Tritheistical* Hypothesis.

The first Argument I produced against it was drawn from *Moses*, and our Saviour, who quotes the Text. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord (Jehovah) your God is one Lord*; one necessarily-existing Substance.

K

It

It is very observable that, after our Saviour had quoted these Words, when the Scribe said, *There is one God, and there is none other but He*, Christ commends the Scribe for *having answered discreetly*: which he could not have done, if, besides that *only* God, (*none other but He*) there had been a *Trinity* of Gods (according to Your Scheme) to be worshipped. Our Saviour's Commendation of the Scribe is, consequently, a strong Reinforcement of the genuine Meaning of the Text.

By necessarily-existing Substance *Moses* means, you say, the *Manner* of the Divine *Existence*: *No other Beings but your Three do exist in that Manner*. The Sense then is this. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord* (viz. such a *Manner* of Existence)



*your God*, is one such *Manner* of Existence. And if he had meant this, the *Israelites* would have been no *wiser* for this *Affertion* of *Moses* than *You* are. According to this Interpretation when the Scriptures tell us, that God made at first *one Man*, from whom the rest descended; we need not understand that he made *one Being*, but *one* such *Manner of Existence*, which was originally communicated to a considerable Number of Men. For though *Jehovah* signifies one Being necessarily-existing, one τὸ ὄν, yet it may signify three separate Beings; provided their Manner of Existence be of the same Kind. *Jehovah* implies Being that exists by Necessity: and consequently, if the Scripture asserts one necessarily-existent Being, what Right

have you to suppose three *divisible* Beings? What seems to have led you into your Mistake was this — *Jehovah*, necessarily-existing Substance, implies two Ideas; *Necessary Existence*, and the *Substance* or *Substratum* of that necessary Existence. In your Exposition you retain the former of these Ideas; and drop the latter, that of the *Substratum*. And whereas your Comment should have run thus; the Substance vested with such a Mode of Existence as is there specified, is one Substance vested with that Mode; by letting the Idea of *Substance* slip out of the Account, you expound it thus: The Mode of Existence is one Mode of Existence. Is this, to turn your own Artillery upon you, to interpret Scripture according to the common Rules of

Critic-

Criticism? or is it not rather to put a *forced and unintelligible Sense when it admits of a plain and intelligible Construction?* I say, plain and intelligible; *viz.* that Being and Being may be so closely and inseparably united as to make one Being, because they have an indivisible περιχώρησις and ἑνώπαξις, a close *In-existence* and *Permeation* of one another, without any Possibility of being fundered the one from the other. According to that of our Saviour — *I am in the Father, and the Father in Me:* and, *the Father that dwelleth in me, &c.* And is not this a much more rational Solution of the Difficulty, as well as more agreeable to Scripture, than your's; who suppose a forlorn *Mode* of necessary Existence to be meant in the Text

without any *Substratum*? Besides, what think you of that celebrated Text, *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One*, τὸ ἓν εἰσι, are one Being; one Nature; in Opposition to the Words in the next Verse, where the three Agents are said to *agree in one*, εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσι, have an *Uniformity*, but are not *united*? If you dispute the Genuineness of the Text, I refer you to MILL, MARTIN, TWELLS, BLACKWALL on the *sacred Classics*, and TRAPP'S *Moyer's Lectures*; If you admit the Text, you must admit that they are One, not merely *uniform* in Essence.

The second Argument against it was, that it was to multiply Beings without Necessity. You had no  
 Grounds

Grounds to suppose three separable Divine Beings, consequently the Supposition of three such Beings was groundless. Scripture, as I have proved above, is against you; and you cannot bring one Shadow of a Proof from Reason. As much as you deal in wonder-working Magic, you cannot conjure up one thin, airy, unsubstantial Phantom of an Argument from the *abstract Nature of the Thing*. You may prove from Effects *one* first Cause, but not *more* than one; *one* being sufficient to produce all the Phænomena in Nature.

It is contrary to the Laws of Disputation only to assert what you should prove: viz. *That you have Grounds for such a Supposition*. He that asserts a Thing should prove it.

Thus defenceless is your *Hypothesis*, *opposed* by plain Texts of Scripture, and *unfriended* by Reason. And what has been hitherto by you advanced, appears to be nothing but the uneasy Efforts of an *Hypothesis* expiring unavoidably, yet struggling hard for Life. Let us see whether you have better Success in what follows.

The third Argument against it you transcribe; which is, that if your supposed three infinite Substances be *divided*, or (for it is the same Thing here) *divisible*, they cannot all be infinite. The Reason, which you have not transcribed, is there subjoined: but if they be *undivided* or *indivisible*, then your Scheme coincides with that of the Orthodox; which is, “neither to  
“con-

“ confound the Persons, nor to divide the Substance.”

To this you reply; *Though you do not admit of three divided Substances, yet you grant they are divisible.* You granted too, what I proved, that if they be *divided*, they cannot be *infinite*. If then (as you grant, and I have proved) *Infinity* excludes *Division*; it follows, that what is *necessarily infinite*, must be *necessarily undivided*. But your three infinite Beings are necessarily *infinite*, as they are necessarily *existent*; they do not admit of any Diminution or Addition; consequently, they must be necessarily *undivided*; and what is necessarily *undivided* is *indivisible*. Or thus; If (as you allow) what is divided cannot be infinite, then a Possibility of Division supposes a Possi-

Possibility of their ceasing to be infinite; and a Possibility of their ceasing to be infinite, supposes a Possibility of their ceasing to be what they necessarily are; which is a Contradiction in Terms.

Again; if nothing can act where it is not, then either each of your three Beings must necessarily co-exist every-where with an uninterruptible Fulness of Being without any Separability of the one from the other; or where there is a Separability of any one of them from the other, there is a Possibility for that Being not to exist there ——— Consequently, there is a Possibility of his not being able to act there ——— Consequently there is a Possibility of his becoming an impotent or imperfect Being ——— Consequently, he will not be necessarily  
God



God ——— Consequently he is no God at all.

You retreat again to your impregnable Fortrefs, *Consciousness*. *Consciousness*, you say, *cannot be supposed without any previous Distinction of Being to support it*. I grant it. But if the *Trinity* is Substance and Substance *essentially united* ——— If what is *essentially* united, is *one*; or, if *indissoluble* Union constitute *Unity* ——— then *Consciousness* or *Consciousnesses*, whatever *Distinction* of Being they may prove, cannot disprove the *Unity*. What is so necessarily rivetted and united, let not that Inchanter *Consciousness* put asunder or disunite. This may serve for an Answer to all you have said concerning *Consciousness*, which does not injure our Scheme, nor benefit your's.

your's. For *Consciousness* cannot *divide* the Substance. I have already proved your supposed three Substances to be *indivisible*: And you unfortunately grant, that *divisible* and *distinguishable* are the same; and so it cannot *distinguish* them either without *dividing* them, which is impossible. Thus you have got a Trinity of Gods, which are neither *divisible* nor *distinguishable*. *Distinct without being divided* is, you are pleased to say, *unintelligible Jargon*.

And now having dispatched your Scheme, what hinders but I might indulge my satyrical Vein after your Example, which I should be proud to follow in every Thing else?—— But I scorn to insult the Dead—— Peace, everlasting Peace be to the  
Shade

Shade of your most lamented, and indeed most lamentable Hypothesis! O darling Offspring of a worthy Sire! Could either my generous Pity (For thou wast, *vel Priamo miseranda*) or thy Father's Prowess in War have saved thee, thou hadst not died. But when there are *mala Stamina Vitæ*; when the Vitals are unsound, all Human Endeavours are vain and ineffectual;

“ Evandro, *qualem meruit*, Pallanta *remitto*; ”

I send you back the dead Corpse to be buried in eternal Oblivion. I allow you, as you have an inexhaustible Fund of Wit, to say a World of fine Things upon it; to strew the Flowers of your Oratory upon it's lifeless Carcase, and to pay  
I
the

the last sad unavailing Office to it's  
*Manes* ———

—— “ *Manibus date lilia plenis* ”  
 “ *His saltem accumulem Donis &*  
*fungar inani*  
 “ *Munere* ” ———

Let not your paternal Tenderneſs  
 carry you any farther. Have no  
 Recourſe to magic Arts to call up  
 it's fleeting Shade ; or, if You do,  
 do not expect that I ſhould wage  
 War with an unbodied Phantom.

“ *Irruit ac ferro fruſtra diverberat*  
*Umbras.* ”

It would undoubtedly have been  
 barbarous to rob you of your unfor-  
 tunate Infant, if your Imagination  
 had been barren. But you may well  
 bear the Loſs. Your happy and in-  
 ventive

ventive Fancy, which is married to so masculine and regular a Judgment, will soon repair the Damage with a numerous Race of beautiful and lasting Productions,

— “ *Pulchrâ faciat Te Prole Parentem.* ”

To return ; I never affirmed, that “ *Person* and *Substance* were unintelligible.” All this whole Paragraph turns upon that Mistake ; and upon confounding *Unintelligible* with *Incomprehensible*.

In the next Paragraph you will not admit the Notion of an *infinitely-extended Deity*, for Fear it should draw along with it some Consequences, which would be injurious to your late dear departed Hypothesis. Well ; will you admit the Words of  
the

the *Psalmist*? *Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit, or whither shall I go then from thy Presence? If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there: If I go down to Hell, thou art there also. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermost Parts of the Sea; even there also shall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right-Hand shall hold me. Is not acting in Heaven distant and distinct from acting in Hell, or in the Sea? And does not distinct, distant Action prove distant, distinct Substance; or a local Distinction of Substance? "Can a Thing," say you, "be distinct from itself?" No; if by Self you mean Personality, and the whole of that Personality. For then the Question would be; Can the whole, as whole, be distinct*

*distinct* from the *whole*? But Substance *essentially* united to Substance, and therefore *one*, may admit of *Distinction*. Answer me this Question: Is the Substance, which is in Heaven, one individual Substance with that which filleth all Things? and it will be an easy Matter to answer your's. God exists *wholly* in Heaven; or else there is only *Part* of God there. Well then; according to the Scheme of *Non-Extension*, to which you are a late Convert, can the same numerical Being be *confined*, and yet *unconfined*? “Can there be a Diffusion of it,” to use Dr. WATERLAND’S Words, “every-where, and yet nothing be diffused?” For it is supposed that the whole Essence is *diffused* all over the Universe, and yet remains whole

L and

and *undiffused* in Heaven. According to the Scheme of *Non-Extension* we have so many distinct, numerical *Wholes*, which make one numerical, *distinct Whole*, because essentially united. According to the Scheme of *Extension*, we have so many *distinct numerical Parts*, which have the *whole Attributes* residing in them, and yet make one numerical Substance, for the same Reason. Both agree, that the Divine Nature is *distinct*, though *undivided*.

Supposing my Soul had exactly the same Perfections as your's, (by the Way, I wish mine had) and were, by the Power of God, unalienably united; so that you became, in a *literal* Sense, *Dimidium Animæ meæ*, which you are now in a *figurative* one; it is plain they would



be *one*, as far as we understand any Thing of *Unity*. For when we perceive any Object in a *continued Position*, fenced out from other Things, we never scruple to give it the Name of *One*; and being incapable of Separation, and being of the same Kind and Degree, they might not only be *called*, but would really be strictly *One*. But it is not so plain, that this *Unity* between us would be a Bar to all *Distinction*: You might exert yourself in a *distinct* Manner; You might be adorning *Morality*, while I was employed in dry *Metaphysics*.

“ If three intelligent Acting Substances can be made out to be one intelligent Acting Substance, then, &c.” Answer: This supposes Unity of Person and Unity of

Substance to be equivalent. Whereas Plurality of Persons implies the Substance, though *united*, to be *distinguished* after such a Manner. Plurality of Substances implies the Substance to be *divided*. So many separable Persons are so many Substances; but Persons having no possible Detachment the one from the other, are one Substance. The Persons then are each *Substance*, but not *A Substance*; because we never give the Name of *A Substance* but where the Substance is *aliene*, and independent of another. Person then, each Divine Person, as I said before, is *Being*, because it exists; but not *A Being*, because the Persons do not exist separate.

In Answer to this, you oblige me with another Specimen of my Reasoning:

soning: " God and my Soul are," according to my Way of Arguing, " each *Being*; but not *Beings*, because they do not exist separately." And is this a Specimen of my Reasoning? Surely you could not think me so senseless. My Soul is *actually* divided from God as He exists in Heaven; and as to that *particular* (I was going to say *numerical*) Substance, in which I *live, and move, and have my Being*, I am capable of being removed from That, considered as *particular*, to any Other (call it Portion or Whole) of the Deity. Wherever I go the Deity is still. But then it is the Deity as *locally distinct*; and by Annihilation I am entirely cast out of his Presence.

But this is not all. Another Ingredient of Unity is, that the Substance

be of *the same Kind*, or *homogeneous*. Now though God is a Spirit, and my Soul a Spirit; yet Spirit does not signify one *determinate* Kind of Being; but is one of your *negative Ideas*. And though we call every Thing *Spirit* that is *not Matter*; yet it is as improper a Division to range Beings into Spirit and not-Spirit, as it would be into *Horse* and not-*Horse*. As my Soul is of a quite different Essence from the Table on which I write, though they are both Substance; so God transcends my Soul infinitely more (though they are both Spirit) than my Soul can this Table. *Homogeneity* therefore, or a Negation of Mixture, being to be taken into the Account of *Unity*, as well as *Indivisibility*; it is plain my Soul, however

ever closely *united*, cannot be strictly one with God.

To conclude, Whatever Being *homogeneous*, is essentially united, is one, whether the Scheme of Extension, or Non-Extension takes Place ; nay, if you should reject them both, it will stand collected in itself upon the sure Bottom of common Sense. The Trinity is *Substance* and *Substance* essentially united — Therefore the Trinity is *One*.

You will find this Letter very confused : But having had so many Proofs of your Candour, I am under no Apprehension upon that Account.

I should be dead to all Sentiments of Friendship, if unaffected with your last very affectionate Paragraph.

graph. I cannot equal it; and therefore will not attempt it.

That you may long continue happy in the Possession of an easy Fortune, a clear Head, and a generous Heart, is the sincere Wish of,

SIR,

*Your most affectionate Friend,*

*And humble Servant,*

JER. SEED.



The

## The Fourth LETTER.

*To the Rev. T. H. relating to a Passage in one of the Author's Sermons.*

DEAR SIR,

I AM obliged to any Person, who will point out to me what he apprehends to be a Fault in any of my Writings. As to the Passage which you mention, *Vol. II. p. 95.* my only Fault is, which is a great One, that I have not expressed myself as I should have done. My Meaning was, that “ the Number  
“ of the Damned will bear no more  
“ Proportion to that of the Blessed  
“ *throughout the whole Universe,*  
“ *than, &c.*” not confining myself to the Inhabitants of the Earth:  
Accord-

Accordingly, in this very sermon, *Page 125, Line 19th*, I expressly call the *Damned* a *few incurable Members of the whole stupendous Body of the Universe*; not meaning that they were *absolutely* few, but *comparatively* with the whole Body of intelligent Beings. If the worthy Gentleman, whose Name you do not mention, had thought my Words capable of this Construction, I dare venture to say, he would not have made any Objection against them.

But supposing my Words will not bear this Sense; give me Leave to observe, that they are not a positive *Affertion*, as you seem to think; they are only a charitable *Presumption*. If I had had sufficient Authority from Scripture, I would not have said, *it may be presumed*; but, *it is cer-*



*certain.* The Reasons for such a *Presumption* (for they are not strong enough to found any *Doctrine* upon) are as follow. *First*, If I am not mistaken, one half of Mankind are cut off before they come to the full Use of their Reason, or have *their Senses* sufficiently *exercised to discern between moral Good and Evil*. These, if baptized, are undoubtedly in a State of Salvation; if unbaptized, they may be saved by the uncovenanted Mercies of God; at least, they will not be made miserable in a future State. *Secondly*, If you add to these all those who live and die in a State of invincible Ignorance, or a State that makes very near Approaches to it, (surprizing Instances of which you may meet with even in our own Country) the

Num-

Number rises greatly above one half of Mankind. *Thirdly*, Among *Adults*, (who have, or may have clear Ideas of their Duty) for one that lives and dies a hardened Criminal, there are Numbers who do not allow themselves in the habitual Practice of any deliberate, known Sin. Instances of Baseness, Villainy, and malicious Wickedness are still *surprising*; which they would not be, unless they were rare and uncommon. But enough of this, that I may not enter on a beaten Topick.

It has been proved at large, that there is far more moral Good, than Evil even in this Earth; and consequently, one would think, far more *good* Men, in a qualified Sense of the Word, than *bad*: consequently, there will be more happy than miserable

ferable even among *Adults*, who have, or may have just Apprehensions of their Duty. And for those who have not, and perhaps cannot have, God will *accept them according to what they have. and not according to what they have not.* These Last, however, I take to make up the Bulk of Mankind in all Ages. For the Prevalency of moral Good, see Archbishop KING on the *Origin of Evil*, especially *Note (AA)*.

Laying all these Things together, *viz.* the Case of Infancy and Childhood, the Case of invincible Ignorance, the much greater Number of good Actions than bad, I think there are sufficient Grounds for a charitable Presumption, and I meant nothing more. A great many other Things might be taken into the Account, as  
the

the Strength of some Men's Passions, which I have hinted at in the same Paragraph. As for the Scripture Texts which seem to say, that the Number of the *saved* will be *few*, I beg Leave to refer the Gentleman to *Sermon XIIth, Vol. IV. of Dr. CLARKE'S Posthumous Sermons*; to which I may add the pious and judicious Archbishop SHARP, in his *Vth Serm. of Vol. III.*

But if the Gentleman should think the Passage indefensible, as perhaps it is, I shall either strike it out, if ever the Book has a second Edition, or qualify it as above\*: and any other obnoxious Passage, which he or you will be so kind as to shew

\* N. B. The Author has qualified the Passage referred to, by adding the Words, *throughout the whole Creation.* Vid. SEED'S Sermons, *Vol. II. p. 97. Second Edition.*

me, shall have the same Fate. Pray my humble Service to him.

I write this with a violent Fit of the Head-ach upon me, which hinders me from expressing myself so well as I could wish.

I am ashamed, that I have not answered a former Letter of your's before this. The Truth of the Matter is, it is unanswerable: Though I always read your Letters with Pleasure, yet it is a Mortification to me to answer them: because I cannot write with that Life and Spirit with which you do. I thank you for the many ingenious Things you say in your last. I shall keep it by me as an Instance how far you could be mistaken, in your younger Years, in your favourable Judgment on me and my Sermons. I hope this Letter

ter will find you well. It is some Pleasure to me, that you do not complain of your bad State of Health, as you did in the Letter before. What Success do your Proposals meet with? I am afraid you find, what I always observed, that the World does not encourage modest Worth. Pray let me hear from you, and believe me to be,

DEAR SIR,

*Your affectionate Friend,*

Enham, July 12th,  
1743.

J. SEE D.



The

## The Fifth LETTER.

*Wrote, under a feigned Name, to a  
FRIEND in a dangerous Fit  
of Sicknefs.*

S I R,

**A** Sincere Desire to do you  
Good, which is my only  
Motive to write, must be  
likewise my only Apology for trou-  
bling you with this Letter.

If I am not misinformed, your  
Case is not without some Danger :  
You may, for ought you know,  
stand just upon the Brink of Eter-  
nity ; an Eternity of Happiness or  
Misery. And will you, Sir, auda-  
ciously rush into the sacred Presence  
of the great Judge of Heaven and  
Earth, as *the Horse rusheth into the*  
M Battle,

*Battle*, without any Fore-thought or Consideration what may become of you hereafter? No, Sir, *I hope better Things* from you, who cannot be unapprised of the great Value of an immortal Soul. Can Man, foolish Man, that cannot often gain the least Preferment here without considerable Application, think, that *an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory* will be prostituted to his lazy Wishes and spiritless Endeavours, or perhaps to his No-Endeavours at all?

GOD, Sir, has blessed you with very good Sense; be pleased then to exert it, in considering — Whether you have fully answered the End, for which an infinitely-wise Being sent you into the World — Whether you have endeavoured to

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keep



keep up a Sense of the Regard due to the Deity, by an exemplary Piety ; and to promote the Good of your Fellow-Creatures by an active Benevolence. Do not you think these Ends worthy of a reasonable Being ? And do not you think that God created you to answer these Ends ? Your Illness, Sir, is perhaps a lingering Illness, and you may yet perhaps, in some Measure, answer the End of your Creation, by joining, as far as your Health will permit, with your Family in Morning and Evening Prayers ; by expressing an undiffembled Love and Gratitude to that Being, who died to procure Pardon and eternal Happiness for you, for me, nay, even for the greatest of Sinners, upon their sincere Repentance ; by forgiving every

one, that has wronged you, and by making ample Restitution, if you have wronged any ; by bearing your Sickness with Patience, and an humble Resignation to God. Your *Sun*, though probably near its *setting*, may yet *shine* out, and those, who are near you, may see, and be influenced by your good Works, *to go, and do likewise.*

Pardon me, Sir, if I take the Liberty to tell you, that I am sorry to hear you have generally neglected to receive the *Sacrament*. If this is true, you have lived in a State of wilful Disobedience to one of God's express Commands. And wilful Disobedience to that Being, from whom every Thing that you have is received, and to whom every Thing that you can do is but your bounden Tribute, is no flight,

flight, no inconsiderable Crime. You, who, perhaps, may think it not immoral to disobey the great Majesty of Heaven in positive Instances; yet would judge it highly criminal for a Son to disobey his Parent, or a Servant his Master in indifferent Matters. To eat Bread, and drink Wine, is indeed *in itself* of no Signification. But to eat Bread and drink Wine out of a Principle of sincere Obedience to Him who made You, and of Love and Gratitude to Him who redeemed you, with an affectionate Desire that you may be a Partaker of the Benefits of his Passion — this is Virtue, substantial Virtue. Whatever crude and undigested Notions some may form of God's Mercy, it is as certain, as it is that there is a

Deity ; that he will make some Distinction between those who have obeyed him ; and those who have wilfully disobeyed him. And what that Distinction will be, I leave you to consider. Those cannot be entitled to the Divine Favour, that are regardless of the Divine Will and Pleasure.

But, before you receive the *Sacrament*, it will be necessary for you to take a Review of your past Life. Your Sicknefs having confined you to your Room, you must have a great many vacant Hours upon your Hands ; and a Christian ought to be then most busy, when, in the Language of the World, he has nothing to do : but, in the Language of Reason and Christianity, has his *eternal Salvation to work out with Fear*

*Fear and Trembling.* Judge yourself, and *then you will not be judged of the Lord.* But if you neglect to do this, then think what a shocking Thing it must be to give an Account before the greatest Being in the World, of a Life, that you perhaps cannot reflect on seriously in private, and by yourself, without Shame and Confusion. Look up to that Being whom you have offended, with all the Humility of a contrite Spirit, and look upon this World as (what it may soon perhaps in Reality be) *Nothing to you.* Soon, very soon (oh, may it not prove too soon for you! I mean before a thorough Repentance) *may* that Being, whom *none can see, and live,* sit in Judgment, on your Soul: And then you must either be, what

I sincerely wish, eternally happy ; or, what I tremble to think of, eternally miserable. If the latter, which God forbid ! should be your Case : How dreadful must it be to lift up those Eyes, which you had wilfully shut before, just as you are sinking, irrecoverably sinking, in endless Misery ? *Behold, now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation !* On your present Behaviour, on this great Crisis, *your ALL* depends ! God, who will *not despise a troubled and a contrite Heart*, will have Compassion on you, provided you have first Compassion on yourself. But if you do not return to him with a whole Heart ; nothing is more fit, than that they, who are incorrigibly Bad, should be irretrievably Wretched.

I say no more. May God grant that *you may know the Things belonging to your Peace, before they be for ever hid from your Eyes!*

Thus I have wrote, what I am sure is a very *affectionate*, and what I wish may prove a very *affecting* Letter. It is not material to inform you, from what *Hand* this Epistle comes: It is enough to assure you, that it proceeds from an *Heart* sincerely your's,

May 9.

*E. E.*



An

An ESSAY on refined and  
friendly Conversation.

*Written in the Twenty-second Year  
of the AUTHOR's Age.*

**I**T has been observed that some, who have been justly esteemed *Writers* of the first Rank in the Learned World, have not been favoured with a very happy Turn for Conversation; and that others, on the contrary, could never make their Appearance to Advantage in Print, who were yet looked upon as the very Life and Genius of every private Company they came into.

Thus Mr. ANTHONY WOOD informs us, "That, whenever Sir WILLIAM KILLIGREW took Pen in  
" Hand,



“ Hand, he did not come up to the  
“ never-failing Smartness, which he  
“ shewed in Conversation ; whereas  
“ Mr. COWLEY was the Reverse  
“ of this Character, as Sir JOHN  
“ DENHAM gives us to understand  
“ in the following Lines :

“ *Had COWLEY ne’er spoke, KILLI-  
GREW ne’er writ ;*  
“ *Combin’d in one they’d shew’d a  
matchless Wit.*”

This may be accounted for after the following Manner : Some Men are of an airy, volatile Temper ; the Edge of their Wit is very *fine*, but soon turn’d : They have Briskness and Vivacity of Spirit enough for a sharp, surprizing Repartee, or any other extempore Sally of Fancy ; but they have not that Strength and Steadiness

diness of Spirit, which is necessary to keep up an uninterrupted Tenour of good Writing, and to convey their Thoughts with Chastity and Propriety of Style. And indeed even in Conversation I have observed some Gentlemen of this Stamp, when they have fallen foul on Men of superior Sense, to have been very brisk and vigorous in their first Attack ; but fainter and weaker in their last Efforts. Their Spirits evaporated, and, if their Antagonist bravely stood his Ground, he was convinced, that their Forces were rather for a short Skirmish of Wit, than for a set and lasting Battle. They put me in Mind of what some ancient Historians relate of the *Gauls*, viz. That in the Beginning of the Fight, they used to perform more than *Men* ; but towards

wards the Conclusion of it less than *Women*. Some on the other Hand, are of a more phlegmatick Constitution ; their Parts are slow, but sure ; and, what is wanting in Sprightliness, is made up in what we call strong, masculine Sense.

I would therefore observe, that there are two Kinds of Wit ; the one I call *Tinsel-Wit*, which consists of glittering Points, little Flourishes, and ludicrous Conceits : the other may be styled true Sterling-Wit ; which is made up of a rich Vein of good Thinking, exalted Sentiments, and curious Observations. The former is more glaring and dazzling ; the Touches of the latter are very masterly, but too delicate and nice for vulgar Observers. The former pleases more upon a superficial, transient View ;

View ; the latter upon a mature Deliberation ; the one therefore more taking in common Conversation ; the other in Writing.

That I may not lose myself in too large a Field, I shall reduce my Thoughts to the three following Heads, *viz.*

I<sup>st</sup>, The Advantages of refined and friendly Conversation.

II<sup>dly</sup>, The Subject Matter of it ; and,

III<sup>dly</sup>, The Manner of handling the Topicks of such Conversation.

I<sup>st</sup>, On the Advantages of refined and friendly Conversation.

One of the greatest Pleasures a Man can propose to himself in this World is to live with a small, select Company  
of

of learned and virtuous Friends, in an uninterrupted Intercourse of mutual Civilities and Endearments. A refined and masterly Conversation with Men of this Turn, brightens the Imagination, and ripens the Judgment, and convinceth us, how much the *Friend* improves the *Scholar*. As by reading we take in a vast many Ideas; so, by Conversation, we learn to marshal them in their proper Order. The Style of several Learned Men has been embarrassed and perplexed; for no other Reason, I believe, but because they had too much led the Lives of Recluses. Their Heads, instead of a regular Train of Thinking, have been crammed with a confused Groupe of Ideas.

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The Earl of CLARENDON, in his *Survey of the Leviathan*, informs us, that Mr. HOBBS spent too much Time in *Thinking*, and too little in *Exercising* those Thoughts in the Company of other Men of the same, or as good Faculties: for Want whereof he contracted such a Morosity, that he was at the same Time possessed *with* a Spirit of Contradiction, and yet impatient *of* Contradiction from others. Conversation therefore is very necessary to beat down that over-bearing Temper, and Self-sufficiency of Mind, which is so very disagreeable to the World. Men of the most enlarged Views cannot take in the whole Compass and Extent of Truth: almost every-one, by a peculiar Cast of Mind, sees Things in a different

Light.

Light. Wherefore Persons of lower Attainments very often make some Discoveries, which have escaped the Observation of Men of much greater Depth and Penetration : as poorer Countries can boast of some distinguishing Products, which the richer are destitute of. Whether Providence did not wisely ordain this, that the latter might not entertain an overweening Conceit of their own Abilities, and the former have too great a Diffidence of their own Parts, I shall not presume to determine. However, the Thing itself is too obvious to admit of any Dispute ; and from hence we may gather the Necessity of interchanging our Thoughts in Discourse, if we would improve them to the utmost.

There are some Men, who have

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excellent good Sense, and yet are very distrustful of it. A little Modesty indeed is a thin transparent Veil, that shews those Graces, which it would seem to cover. One of this Make is like a new-blown Rose, which is more sweet and beautiful, when it's Leaves are a little folded; than when it's Glories are fully displayed. But, on the contrary, an *excessive* Modesty lays a Person under such Apprehensions of *offending*, that it makes him less capable of *pleasing*. To remedy this Inconvenience, a Club of sincere learned Friends may be of admirable Use. Here he may give the full Play to his Genius, and descant upon any Topick with Freedom, where he is sure nothing will be discovered to his Disadvantage; and, in short, bring every Thought to the Test and Examination



mination of those Gentlemen ; who have that ingenuous Frame of Mind, that generous Sincerity of Heart, as to be very ready and *willing*, that distinguishing Judgment, and Clearness of Head, as to be very *able*, to point out his Beauties and Faults ; to rectify his Mistakes, and applaud his Excellencies.

The last and greatest Advantage I shall mention, is that of *mutual Advice* : “ It may be reasonably “ believed,” (says the *Noble Historian*) of the Duke of BUCKINGHAM, “ that if he had been blest “ with one faithful Friend, who “ had been qualified with Wisdom and Integrity, that great “ Person would have committed as “ few Faults, and done as transcendent worthy Actions, as any Man “ who

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“ who shined in such a Sphere in  
“ that Age in all *Europe*.” But for  
Want of this Happiness, “ he was  
“ carried away by the Current, or  
“ rather Torrent of his impetuous  
“ Passions.” A remarkable and  
pregnant Instance of the Advantages  
of Friendship ! When an intimate  
Friend seems to be actuated with a  
Spirit of Sincerity ; and gives us to  
understand, he has our Interest much  
at Heart : This opens all the Ave-  
nues to our Mind, strengthens and  
enforces his Admonitions, so that  
they never fail to make a much  
deeper Impression, than the most  
masterly Strokes of a Book of  
Morality. We consider the Author  
as influenced by a Motive of doing  
Good in general ; whereas the Friend  
is acted by a Concern for us in par-  
ticular ;

ticular ; and this Consideration makes us lay his Advice more to Heart. A Society of Friends will not think it sufficient to reprove a Man for flagrant, enormous Faults ; but will make it their Business to animadvert upon any little Indecency or Flaw in his Conduct. Dr. HAMMOND used to say, it was a poor Design in Friendship to keep the Man we admitted to our Bosom only from being *scandalous* ; as if the Physician should only secure his Patient from the Plague.

*Idly*, Upon the Subject Matter of Conversation.

If I were to propose any Model for Conversation ; I should chuse that of XENOPHON'S *Symposium*, where the Discourse was *divert-*

*ing* without any Levity or Impertinence, and *instructive* without any Stiffness or Austerity. We are told in the *Bibliothèque Choisie*, that Mr. LOCKE, Mr. LE CLERC, and Mr. LIMBORCH used to meet constantly once a Week, and discuss some very important Question, which they had pitched upon before. This Method these famous Authors took, to enlarge the Sphere of their Knowledge by communicating their Thoughts. If Discourse were altogether confined to stated Subjects, it might perhaps be too formal; if intirely occasional, it might evaporate in light Trifles. The best Way therefore would be to observe a Medium, and to set apart about two Hours for some stated Subject, and to give up the rest to any incidental Conversation.

I have known some Companies, in which, if a Man talked virtuously he incurred the Imputation of Hypocrisy; if learnedly, that of Pedantry. Surely no Man of Merit will ever prostitute his good Sense to low Ribaldry and Obscenity, when Learning opens to him the noblest Fields of Speculation. Wit must run very *low*, if nothing but the *Dregs* and *Sediments* of Impurity appear; and it is a Maxim with me, that no one, that had wherewithal to entertain a sound and unbiaſſed Reason, would ever addreſs himſelf with lewd Talk to the corrupt Paſſions and Inclinations of Mankind.

To return from this Digreſſion; I would by all Means, next to *Virtue* and *Religion* in general, recommend *Polemical Divinity*. It would

be too shocking to attack Christianity directly and immediately: Therefore those, who are no Friends to it, sap it's Foundations by Degrees, and begin with it's fundamental Articles. One Error is to pave the Way for another, that they may bring their Designs to bear: And the Mask is to be worn till all Things are ripe for Execution. They look upon all the rest of the World as Men of narrow Views, and therefore deal with them as with strait-mouthed Vessels: If they should go rashly to work, and attempt to throw in too much at once, their Labour would be lost, and their Doctrine fall to the Ground; they, for this Reason, strive to carry their Point by *pouring* in their Tenets *gently* and by Degrees. To prevent this stale Artifice of the

*Deists,*

*Deists*, and to check the gradual Advances of Error; it is a Duty incumbent upon all Men of good Abilities to lay in a competent Stock of *Divinity*. And, in Order to this, it is necessary to impart their Thoughts for their mutual Advantage; which will make them talk as pertinently upon these Topicks as if the Bent of their Studies had been almost entirely applied this Way. A Spirit of Emulation will quicken their Endeavours; and it will be pleasant as well as useful, to point out to one another the Sophistry to which Hereticks have Recourse, to support a sinking Cause.

When a Man knows he must shortly deliver his Thoughts in Conversation upon any important Article or material Question; he reads with  
more

more Attention ; endeavours to draw off the Flower and Spirit of many Authors upon the same Subject ; thoroughly digests his Notions, and treasures them up in his Memory. Besides, his Studies center in one Point ; whereas, at other Times, he may be apt to shoot at Rovers, without aiming at any certain Mark.

If any should object, that what I have recommended would too much pall and flatten the Spirit of Conversation ; I beg Leave to observe, that ludicrous Wit and facetious Discourses may beget in us a short, unsatisfactory Gleam of Joy ; whereas solid Sense and virtuous Reflections impress upon the Mind a calm, lasting Serenity of Temper : The former, if too much indulged, sink, weaken, and debase the Majesty of a rational Soul ;  
whereas



whereas the latter raise, elevate, and ennoble it's Disposition: When a Man has been laying out that Time in improving Discourse which is generally lost in Trifles; the Mind is conscious of having acted suitably to the Dignity of it's Nature, and for this Reason feels that refined Delicacy of Pleasure, and that agreeable Complacency, which is infinitely preferable to any short-lived Blaze of Mirth and Laughter.

I would not be thought an Enemy to the Graces and Embellishments of *Wit*, though I think *Religion* and *Learning* ought to take Place of them. The Imagination does indeed sometimes get the Ascendant of Reason; and a surprizing Brightness of Thought has been observed in some, where a steady Judgment and nervous

vous Sense have been wanting: As Diamond-Mines are said to be often found in loose, sandy Ground. But *Wit*, under due Regulations, and in it's proper Sphere, may be of no small Service; and I have known some Men, who would have embittered the Conversation by a Singularity of Carriage, and a morose Reservedness of Temper, dextrously *ral-  
lied* into good Humour and Complaisance, and forced to *sacrifice to  
the Graces*. The Waters of *Marab* (if I may use a Scripture-Simile) were very *bitter*, and disagreeable to the Taste, till the Prophet, by throwing in some *Salt*, rendered them *sweet* and palatable. If *Wit*, instead of keeping within it's proper Province, be misemployed to keep Vice in Countenance, and decry Men of  
Me-

Merit; nothing can be of a more dangerous and destructive Tendency. If I should express myself with more Warmth against this Abuse of it, I should be very excusable, since to this was, in a great Measure, owing the Disgrace of the greatest Man *England* could boast of; in whom were happily reconciled the disinterested Spirit and Sincerity of the Patriot, and the deep Penetration and consummate Abilities of the Statesman: When that faithful Counsellor represented to King CHARLES II. the Blackness of his darling Vices, which the Wits of the Age had palliated under the softer Name of *Gallantries*; the Duke of BUCKINGHAM, and other Courtiers of the same Stamp, took Occasion to ridicule, expose, and mimick him before his

Ma-

Majesty ; and, with an Air of Contempt, used to call him the *King's School-Master*. In the *Apology* for himself, which he left behind him when he fled beyond Sea, he complains heavily of some, who had reviled all Counsels and Counsellors ; who had turned Things serious and sacred into Ridicule, and taken all Means to render him ungrateful both to the King and People.

Is a Man possessed with a great many shining Qualities ? If he have but one remarkable Foible, if, like *Achilles*, he be only vulnerable in one Part, these Gentlemen, like *Paris*, (so dextrous Archers are they) will be sure to hit that Place, and too successfully wound his Reputation. Let then all Topicks of *De-*  
*famation,*

*famation*, and let all *Abuse of Wit* be exploded. I have always been mightily pleased with that amiable, and, I hope, just Character, which a celebrated Writer gives Mr. CONGREGVE; namely, that, after a joyful Evening spent in his Company, no Man could ever reflect upon any Expression of Mr. CONGREGVE's that dwelt upon him with Pain and Uneasiness. A good-natured Wit will never think, that nothing but the Poignancy of *Raillery* and *Scandal* can give Life and Spirit to Conversation: whereas unhappy Tempers, that are eaten up with Spleen and Melancholy, take a fullen Satisfaction in blasting Reputations. And it must be owned, that they have very often an unlucky Turn this Way; malignant Glances of  
Satyr,

Satyr, like Flashes of Lightning, coming generally from a dark, gloomy Sky.

III<sup>dly</sup>, Upon the Manner of handling the Subject-Matter of Conversation.

The great Secret of Conversation is, to aim rather at being *agreeable*, than to appear *shining*, in Discourse. If we should trace the Faults and Defects of Conversation up to their original Source, I believe most of them might be resolved into the Neglect of this Rule. Some are still endeavouring to raise the Admiration of the Company, instead of gaining their Love. This kindles a Spirit of Contention and Strife for the Superiority; and the Affectation of the *Wit* and *Scholar* destroys the Complaisance

fance and Benevolence of the *Gentleman* and *Friend*. If a Man should happen to be of superior Abilities to the rest of the Society ; he should, for that Reason, put himself upon a Foot of Equality with them ; condescend to the Level of their Capacities, and should not set his shining Qualities in a full, glaring Light, but rather modestly cast them in Shades.

To the Neglect of the Rule which I have mentioned, it is owing, that some are so very ostentatious of their Reading. This is a certain Sign, that their Learning fits but loosely about them ; and, if I may use so homely an Allusion, I would say, they have not digested those Notions very well, which they are so apt to throw up again upon every, or rather upon no Occasion at all. To

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the same Principle it is owing, that some are continually putting their Inventions upon the Rack, to say something surprizing and uncommon: Whereas, if Wit carries an Air of much Study and Premeditation; if, instead of being a *Volunteer*, it be visibly *pressed* into the Service, nothing can be more nauseating and distastful. It is with Wit, as with *Mercury*: That which is called *Virgin-Quicksilver*, which streams out freely of itself in great Drops (which is readily discovered without the Help of Fire) is, upon several Accounts, far more valuable than that which is extorted and forced out by the Furnace. To the same Principle may be ascribed that fiery Spirit of Opposition, which is so predominant in some Men, that, rather  
than



than confess one Absurdity, they will be reduced to a Necessity of committing ten.

They are too far embarked in a bad Cause to make a Retreat with a good Grace ; and therefore if they have added to their natural Parts the Superstructures of Learning, they will entrench themselves within a vast many artful Distinctions and subtile Evasions.

They are very prolix in invalidating those Arguments, which Nobody lays any Stress upon ; but when they are really strong and impregnable, they would fain slip them over as hastily as they can, and take a slight, cursory Notice of them. Very material Objections are to them like marshy Ground : A Man may make a Shift to run lightly and

nimbly over it ; but if he ever tread leisurely, and dwell long upon one Place, he infallibly sinks.

If ever a *Vein of Ridicule* be necessary, I think it is here, where a *Vein of just Arguing* can have no Effect. When a Man is steeled and hardened against all Conviction, we may, like *Hannibal*, after other Expedients have been tried in vain, cut through the *Rock* with *Vinegar*. Some *Jesuits* once in Company with Monsieur BOILEAU, asserted, according to the Principles of that Society, that *Attrition* was only necessary ; and that we were not obliged to *love God*. It was to no Purpose to unravel their Fallacies : They shewed themselves inviolably attached to their Error ; when Mr. BOILEAU, starting up, cried : “ Oh !  
“ how

“ how prettily will it sound in the  
“ Day of Judgment, when our LORD  
“ shall say to his Elect: *Come you,*  
“ *ye well-beloved of my Father*; for  
“ you never loved me in your Life,  
“ but always forbade that I should be  
“ beloved, and constantly opposed  
“ those Hereticks, who were for ob-  
“ liging Christians to *love me*; and  
“ you, on the contrary, *Go to the Devil,*  
“ *and his Angels, you the accursed of*  
“ *my Father*; for you have loved me  
“ *with your whole Heart*, and have so-  
“ licited and urged every Body else to  
“ *love me.*” This Raillery struck the  
Opponents dumb; and bore down that  
Opposition, which the most cogent  
Arguments before could not quell.

—— *Ridiculum acri*

*Fortius & melius magnas plerumque  
secat res.*

If a handsome Opportunity presents itself, it may not be amiss to deal with an opinionative Fellow, as Bishop BRAMHALL did with the *Popish Missionary*. When his Antagonist would obstinately maintain whatever he had rashly advanced, the Bishop drove the Disputant up into so narrow a Corner, that he was forced to affirm, that *Eating* was *Drinking*, and *Drinking* was *Eating*, in a *material* or *bodily* Sense. This Assertion was so big with palpable Absurdities, that he needed no greater Trophy, if he could get under the *Jesuit's* Hand what he declared with his Tongue; which, being desired, was by the other, in his Heat and Shame to seem to retreat, as readily granted. But upon cooler Thoughts (says my Author)

thor) finding perhaps, after the Contest was over, that he could not quench his Thirst with a Piece of Bread; he reflected so sadly on the Dishonour he had suffered, that, not being able to digest it in ten Days Time, he died.

Why are so many so very solicitous to skreen themselves under ambiguous Terms, and to give a plausible Turn to the most dangerous Errors? Is it to impose upon the Bulk of Mankind, as Pirates do upon unwary Sailors, by hanging out false Colours? Does it not bespeak a much greater Turn of Mind to retract an untenable Notion, than even to carry one's Point on the Side of Truth? The latter may be often owing merely to the Strength of a good Cause; whereas the for-

mer is the Result of that ingenuous Temper, and that Largeness of Soul, which animates a Man with the noblest Views, and makes him willing to sacrifice the Vanity of being thought an able Disputant to the disinterested Pursuit of Truth. His Opponent only conquers *him*; whilst *he* triumphs over two very powerful Enemies, Error and himself: By the latter, I mean those Prejudices and Passions, which hang a wrong Bias upon the Mind.

*Good-Nature* is undoubtedly the first Ingredient in good Conversation. The Man that is always pleased, and in good Humour, never fails of pleasing the Company. *Learning* should be grafted upon this Quality; and the World has too great Reason to lament, that ill-natured  
Men,

Men, especially if they be ingenious, should ever have the Advantage of a *refined* Education. For though it be a common Observation, that Learning fours a Man's Temper; yet I am apt to think it is a much truer Observation, that his Temper fours his Learning. The Mind is the Cask, and if that be sour and impure, the most generous Wine will lose its own Taste, and receive a Tincture from the Vessel. When therefore the Bent of a Man's Inclinations is naturally perverse, Learning falls in with it; and teaches *him*, whose Wit and Malice made him but too satyrical before, to give a keener Edge to his Raillery, and wound with more Success. So that the Superstructure of Education to a Man of this Complexion, is like ad-  
ding

ding Poison to that Arrow, which before was too apt to kill.

*Humility* is another endearing Quality. Nothing can be more odious than Self-sufficiency in Men of superior Attainments, or more ridiculous in Men of inferior Abilities. The World is generally Even with these Men ; and, as they despise all, they are in Return despised by all Mankind. How contrary is that Character which is given of Dr. HAMMOND in his Epitaph:

*Nil eo excelsius erat aut humilius :*

*Scriptis suis Factisque,*

*Sibi uni non placuit,*

*Qui, tam Calamo quam Vita,*

*Humano Generi complacuerat.*



None bid fairer for being Great Men, than those, in whom a modest Opinion of themselves is interwoven with a laudable Ambition : the latter is an Incentive to those Actions which may make them glorious ; and the former is a Bar to all those Attempts, which, being beyond their Strength, may make them ridiculous. The one prompts them to display themselves ; and the other prevents them from exposing themselves. A Desire of Glory, tempered with a Tincture of Humility, is (to use the Simile of an ingenious Writer upon a different Occasion) like a Flame, that trembles as it aspires. A Person of this excellent Frame of Mind knows how to condescend without stooping too low, and how to rise without towering too high.

*Good-*

*Good-Breeding* is little else than Good-Nature polished and beautified by Art. An ill-natured Man may, it is true, observe the little Punctilio's and Forms of Civility; but he will be deficient in the very Essentials. To constitute a finish'd Character, the inflexible Integrity of the *Man of Honour* must be sweetned and qualified by the winning Condescension of the *Courtier*, and regulated by the Piety and Erudition of the *Divine*. How gracefully does Learning sit upon a Man, how venerably amiable does Religion appear to the Eye of the World, when attended with *Good-Breeding*? And how does *Good-Breeding* plead a more solid Title to our Value and Respect, when accompanied with Religion and Learning?

The *Gentleman* makes the *Christian* and *Scholar* beloved ; and the *Christian* and *Scholar* make the *Gentleman* esteemed. All these Accomplishments must enter into the Composition of *refined* Conversation, which is then carried to its greatest Height of Perfection, when what is said upon Matters of Moment, is at once endeared to us by a graceful Manner, and an agreeable Complacency of Behaviour ; is enforced by the Weight and nervous Energy of sound Reason, is enlivened by the exquisite Beauties of fine Sense and elegant Reflections.

An affable Deportment, and Meekness of Temper, will disarm the most violent Antagonist of his Obstinacy, and we need never fear by the Cogency of our Arguments to  
con-

convince the *Understanding* of our Opponent; if we take Care, by the Candour of our Behaviour, to make an Impression on his *Will*. Those who advance the wildest Paradoxes, often dash them with some material Truths, and just Thoughts: It would be therefore worth our while to try, whether by commending them for the latter, we might not dextrously reclaim them from the former: But if, instead of calmly entering into the Merits of the Cause, we should break out into any indecent Sallies of Passion, it will be a very difficult Matter to bring others over to our Notions. For Men, like Loadstones, when they are once too much heated by the *Fire*, lose that attractive Power which they had before. It is prettily said by Bishop TIL-

LOTSON,

LOTSON, “ that those who were  
“ transported by Passion, by their  
“ ill Management of a good Cause,  
“ and by their ungracious Way of  
“ maintaining the Truth, had found  
“ out a cunning Way to be in the  
“ wrong, even when they are in  
“ the right.”

None can be more prejudicial to the Interests of Truth, than those who obtrude their Sentiments upon the Company with the magisterial, supercilious Air of the *Pedant*, instead of offering them with the modest, courtly Address of the *Gentleman*. Nothing conveys Instruction more artfully, than a seeming Diffidence ; of which we have a pregnant Instance in my Lord CLARENDON : “ Mr. *Hambden* ( says he )  
“ was of that rare Affability and  
“ Tem-

“ Temper in Debate, and of that  
“ seeming Humility and Submission  
“ of Judgment, as if he brought  
“ no Opinion of his own with him,  
“ but a Desire of Information and  
“ Instruction; yet he had so subtil  
“ a Way of interrogating, and, un-  
“ der the Notion of Doubts, infi-  
“ nuating his Objections, that he  
“ infused his own Opinions into  
“ those, from whom he pretended  
“ to learn and receive them.” If  
these Measures were so powerful in a  
bad Cause, we may conclude they  
will be irresistible in a good one.

*F I N I S.*



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